

ADRIAN MIKHALCHISHIN / OLEG STETSKO

FIGHTING CHESS with MAGNUS CARLSEN

Progress in Chess

EDITION OLMS



Mikhalchishin/Stetsko · Fighting Chess with Magnus Carlsen

Progress in Chess

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2012

EDITION OLMS



Adrian Mikhalchishin Oleg Stetsko

FIGHTING CHESS WITH MAGNUS CARLSEN

Translated and edited by Ken Neat

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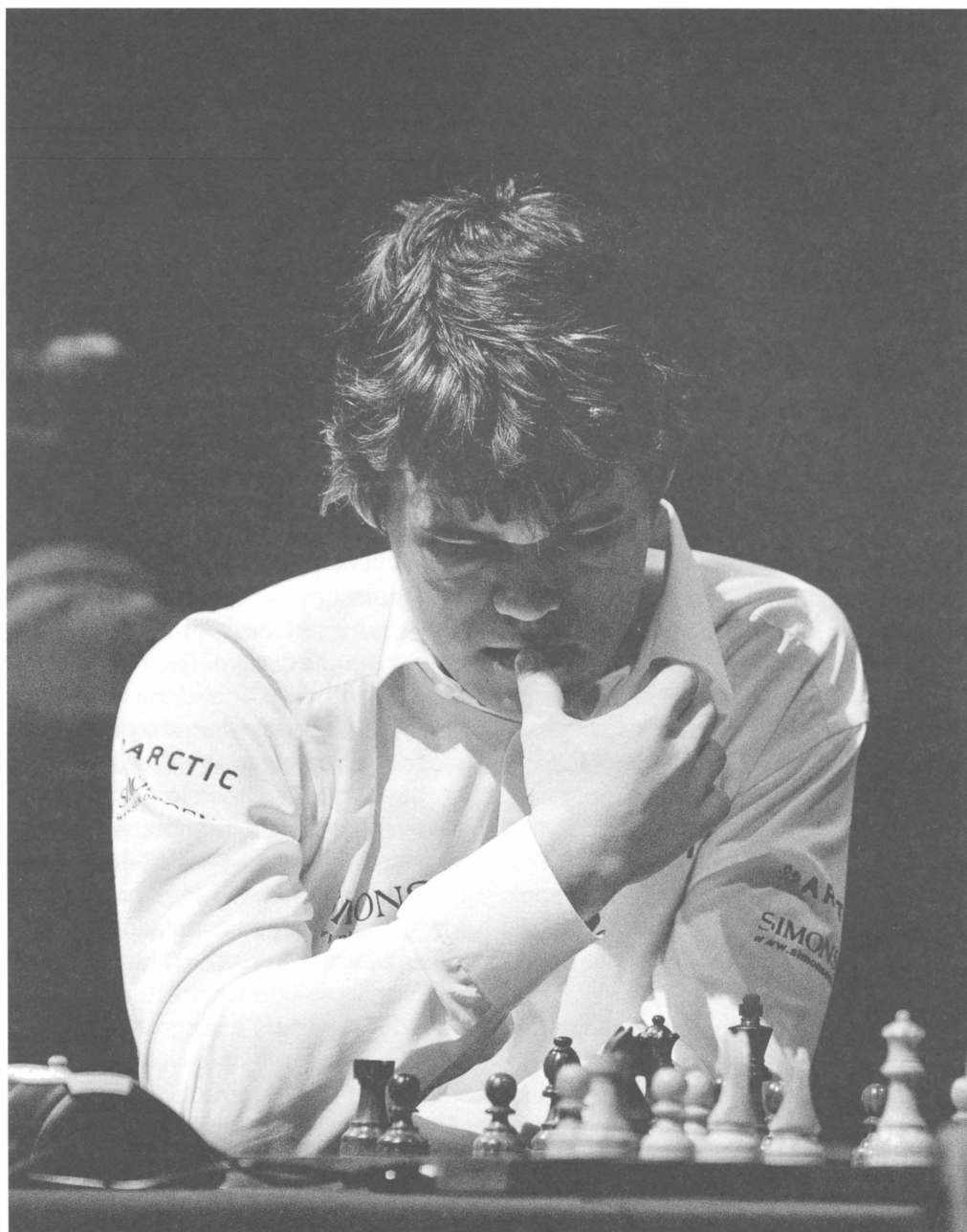


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Preface

The swift rise of the young Norwegian Magnus Carlsen to the top levels of chess has literally overturned impressions about the possibilities of teaching talented children. Indeed, to progress at a young age from a run-of-the-mill master to a real contender for the chess crown in just five years is something that only an outstanding talent is capable of doing. In the history of chess only Garry Kasparov has achieved any similar. In this occurrence there is much that is surprising: both the fact that such an extraordinary talent appeared in 'non-chess' Norway, and the way itself in which this chess mastery was acquired. For graduates and successors of the Soviet Chess School, nurtured in a 'chess' foundation established over decades, and fostered from childhood in clubs at Pioneers Palaces and then in chess schools run by famous mentors, it is hard to imagine a boy grasping the wisdom of chess virtually on his own.

This is correct only in the sense that Magnus likes to study chess on his own. But there were also attendant circumstances: Magnus's father, Henrik Carlsen, was well known in Norway as a chess organiser, and it was he who noticed his son's talent, observing that already at the age of five he had good analytical ability. And, not surprisingly, knowing the precedent of the famous Hungarian Judit Polgar, from an early age the father began assisting his son to become a chess professional, hoping

for great achievements. Another important factor was the boy's home situation. Magnus has a secure basis – a wholesome family, in which his sisters virtually idolise him, and the attention and support of relatives and of society. Already at the age of ten he had the help of a trainer, and as his prowess developed he also acquired the support of financial bodies, including the Microsoft company.

By present-day junior standards, Magnus began a serious study of chess rather late – at the age of eight. The initial motivation was a promise by his father to include him, if he played well, in the Norwegian under-11 championship. This stimulated the boy to study chess for 2–3 hours a day over a period of six months. The rest was accomplished by his all-consuming interest in the game. Many point to the prevalence of computer preparation, even calling Magnus a computer boy. He does not deny his enthusiasm for the computer; indeed it would be strange not to make use of it in the age of universal computerisation. For modern children, using a computer does not present any particular problems, and a grasp of the accompanying programs comes quite naturally to them. As for purely chess preparation, Carlsen uses the computer as an instrument, and he relates sceptically to contentions that it is emasculating live chess. The main thing for Magnus is improving his mastery and achieving results. Here



it is appropriate to recall the pithy saying of Mikhail Botvinnik: 'Chess cannot be taught, one can only learn it!' It is unlikely that Magnus is familiar with the Patriarch's claim, but he has patiently learned, proceeding with the help of the computer, picturesquely speaking, in seven-league steps.

Another very important factor in his improvement has been the reading of chess literature. In the words of his father, he literally swallowed all Kasparov's series *My Great Predecessors* and from them he remembers practically everything. These books are a kind of academic course on the classical heritage of chess. And the fact that he prefers to work on chess on his own ('Magnus is very independent as regards preparation, I only help him', testifies his trainer Simen Agdestein), is merely an indication of his character. In short, we see an example of the effective study of chess by correspondence, based on fertile ground. In the opinion of one of the best trainers of the present time, grandmaster Yuri Razuaev, the boy possessed the gift of self-instruction.

It would be incorrect to talk about the ineffectiveness of this type of study, with references to a lack of 'schooling'. There

have been countless examples of successful self-realisation. His way is familiar to me not just by hearsay, since at a mature age I managed to achieve chess master standard and complete a correspondence course at the Aviation Institute.

By his 19th year Carlsen had completed his chess Academy, he had received high marks from his examiners by victories in very strong tournaments, and he was continuing to improve. This is indicated by his attainment of the high point 2800 in the world rating list, which allows him to be regarded as the strongest player in the West. Carlsen has made his 'way to the top' in chess high society. One of the many ways available to a talented young person. We would like to wish that his 'life at the top' does not collapse, as in the novel of the same name by the well-known English writer John Braine.

In conclusion, we would like to thank grandmaster Andrey Devyatkin for help in describing the childhood stage of Magnus Carlsen's chess career.

Oleg Stetsko

USSR Master of Sport
Senior Trainer of the USSR
national team 1985–89

Magnus Carlsen – Hero of the Computer Era

When we begin examining the chess phenomenon Magnus Carlsen and his way to the top, the first thing that comes to mind is whether we can compare the talented Norwegian with the brilliant chess geniuses of the second half of the 20th century, Robert Fischer and Garry Kasparov. What is it that unites him with these great champions? Above all – a brilliant memory. His first trainer, grandmaster Simen Agdestein, told me that he gave the young Magnus an opening book to read, and the next day, as if nothing had happened, he performed the new opening to a high standard. True, a striving for sharp positions immediately on emerging from the opening, as possessed by the young Fischer and Kasparov, was not very apparent, but already at the age of fifteen he was confidently playing complicated openings such as the Sveshnikov Variation and the Botvinnik Variation.

The greatest influence on the development of the young talent was undoubtedly made by the Norwegian grandmaster Simen Agdestein. This showed itself not only in chess, but also in the fact that Magnus is a good footballer. After all, his trainer played for his country at both chess and football, and he even scored a goal against Italy! They met when Magnus was 10 years old. Initially the boy studied with the Norwegian master Torbjørn Ringdal Hansen, who

was doing his military service at a College for Top Athletes, where Agdestein ran the chess section. And within a year he made incredible progress. This is not surprising: Magnus was literally gripped by chess, playing in all possible tournaments and reading numerous chess books in English.

His first book was *Find the Plan* by Bent Larsen. At that time Agdestein correctly thought that, for lessons with a boy who was at the stage of mastering the basics of chess, a computer was not needed. And only later, when the opening became an important element of the play in tournaments, Magnus began working with the analytical modules *Fritz* and *Rybka*. Agdestein worked with Magnus several times a month, spending two or three hours on the analysis of a game. In Agdestein's opinion, children cannot be forced to study chess. Of course, it is not easy to teach a youngster to play, but if you can arouse his individual interest, miracles occur. This is how it was with Magnus – motivation was the main key to success!

Magnus thought that on the way to higher achievements he should become Norwegian champion, but in 2004 and 2005 the road was blocked by his experienced teacher, and it was only in 2006 that he managed to surpass him. Surprisingly, Magnus was also unable to win in the young age categories of the European



Championships. But where now are those who finished ahead of him? In the history of chess this has also occurred with other players. For example, up to the age of 16 the great Garry Kasparov was twice unable to demonstrate his superiority in class. In the first stage of his work with Magnus, Agdestein set the objective of reaching master level of play and he regarded individual tournaments only as stages towards the achievement of this aim. But already in 2004 he realised that he was unable to raise the youngster to a higher level, and the search for a new trainer began.

Contact with Garry Kasparov early in 2005 was not developed any further. But a mentor was found on Scandinavian soil. After contacts at a number of joint tournaments in Scandinavia, the strong Danish grandmaster Peter Heine Nielsen began working with the youngster. For a long time he had been keeping an eye on the young Norwegian and a year earlier he had commented in the press: the West had not known such a great talent since the time of Fischer, and at such a young age Carlsen was not inferior to either Karpov or Kasparov. At that time Nielsen was actively collaborating with Vishwanathan Anand, and later, when he was having to work with both of them, he would sometimes enlist Magnus to prepare Vishy for important events, such as, for example, the match for the world championship with Kramnik in 2008.

Working with Nielsen, Carlsen substantially expanded his opening repertoire, which had to be greatly modernised. For example, with Black he stopped playing the King's Indian Defence, which did not suit his style. At that time Magnus was most successful in tense positions, in play 'move

by move', so to speak. Although he was still a long way from the best players of this type, such as Fischer and Kasparov, he was nevertheless notable for his sensible and logical play. True, at times his play looked somewhat simplified, sometimes automated, which was a consequence of fascination with computer preparation. Not without reason, Garry Kasparov warned about the pointlessness of such play. This is how he describes the essence of the play in so-called post-modernism chess: 'Nowadays most young players simply move the pieces in anticipation of a mistake, like an ice-hockey team knocking the puck into the opponent's zone, hoping that something will come of this. The pure pragmatism of the young shows itself in many games. Carlsen still needs to raise his understanding to match up with his energy and optimism'.

But even so, Magnus did not develop like a computer player, although the work with Nielsen, who made active use of the computer, seriously developed the analytical aspect of his talent, which is often called playing computer chess. Is this good or bad? Nowadays chess has changed, and the top players are not inclined to philosophise about the position; they need quickly and efficiently to find not so much the best move, as the optimal decision. This enables them for a lengthy time to maintain the tension on the board and to set the opponent the maximum discomfort in the solving of constant problems. The plans for conducting the game in this type of chess are far less concrete than during the times of the great world champions, who adhered to the classical style of play, with the possible exception of Mikhail Tal. But these plans are based on the inten-



sity level of the position and are solved exclusively by concrete measures, not by general reasoning.

The well-known trainer Arshak Petrosian, observing Carlsen's play at the C Tournament in Wijk aan Zee in 2004, was surprised at how confidently the 13-year-old boy could 'serve with either hand', i.e. play both 1. e4 and 1. d4 with equal success. At so young an age, such a thing was typical only of Boris Spassky, the most universal player of the Soviet Chess School, who (stretching the point somewhat) can be regarded as the forerunner of the modern computer generation. Assessing Magnus's play, Arshak Petrosian quite seriously warned his pupil, Peter Leko: 'Here is your future rival, you should observe his play very carefully. He is already quite a strong positional player, and he places his pieces correctly – a rare quality for such an age'.

A new stage in Carlsen's chess biography began quite recently – in the summer of 2009, when he began working with Garry Kasparov. Their first meeting occurred in 2004 at the festival in Reykjavik, when the prodigy's play impressed Kasparov in their rapid game, which the maestro saved only with great difficulty. A year later Magnus was invited by Kasparov to Moscow for lessons with the famous trainers Yuri Razuvaev and Alexander Nikitin. But this work was not continued. Carlsen declined to follow the program developed by the Russian trainers, and decided to improve his chess independently.

However, without highly-qualified help it proved beyond Carlsen's powers to improve on the 'star' level achieved in 2008 (his official rating reached 2776), and the assistance of Kasparov proved most opportune. For Garry the field of activity was

very fruitful. Magnus possesses a natural gift for correctly evaluating a position, a very rare quality, one which at a young age has been possessed by many world champions. In Kasparov's opinion, in style of play the Norwegian youngster is close to Karpov, Smyslov and Capablanca. But since Magnus's style of play is markedly different from that of Kasparov, his contact with the famous champion will undoubtedly expand his chess views. Usually a trainer works with his pupil, but it is unlikely that this is what Kasparov does. His role is rather that of a mentor; there are things he can pass on to his protégé. There is no doubt that Carlsen's opening repertoire will be strengthened – this is a strong component of Garry. Especially since as yet the level of the youngster's opening repertoire does not correspond to his strength of play. At the same time it is important to learn a more productive organisation of the working process, in order to make maximum use of his natural talent.

In the opinion of Arshak Petrosian, working with Kasparov should not so much change the young Norwegian's opening repertoire, so much as shift his motivation to the maximum level. This is the approach of real champions to the play in every game, and the accompanying feeling of one's own superiority can be instilled only by a great champion. This approach to the fight was displayed in October 2009 at the super-tournament in Nanjing. It was there that it became apparent what Magnus has in common with the champions – he began to be feared!

I saw Magnus at many Olympiads and European Championships during his development period. And the first thing that strikes you (incidentally, this is also the



opinion of the well-known manager Silvio Danailov) is the feigned lack of energy, both in external appearance, and in play. All the champions, apart from Karpov and Petrosian, looked very energetic, sometimes even frightening. As for Karpov, he had enormous internal energy, which he was able to transfer to the chess board. The drive of Kasparov and Fischer was felt as soon as their opponent arrived at the chess board. Carlsen conducts certain parts of a game as though imperceptibly, in the style of Karpov or Adams, but, in contrast to them, he not only does not avoid sharp variations, but happily goes in for them. An indication of the youngster's thorough self-confidence is that he ventures to play very sharp variations, without working out all their details, which Kasparov always aimed to do. Yes, there are instances when he plays superficially, but this is typical of young players, who do not always understand and sense the dangers associated with the opponent's counterplay. As for Carlsen, he possesses such a feeling, and this is very important in high-level play. It is another matter that his power begins to display itself only from a certain point in the game, but here he can already be irresistible. Again, this is a vivid characteristic, typical of Karpov and to a certain extent of Fischer.

In recent times Magnus has greatly added to his depth of understanding of chess, he has begun to display an ability to find minimal and latent chances in the position and he has clearly become more forceful in his play. That is, he has mastered the transition to total chess, the readiness to fight to the end. We are seeing the development of a fighter. It should be said that, in their youth, neither Fischer nor

Kasparov was an uncompromising fighter. They became this with the growth in the confidence and power of their play and, let's make no secret of the fact, an awareness of their mission in the chess world. We are also observing this phenomenon with the increase in the mastery of the young Norwegian, which is reflected in an ability to find the best decisions in any position.

But Carlsen is inseparable from his era. He is simultaneously also a computer player – it is all the same to him what he plays, as he looks for the best or optimal solution on the basis of his own individual algorithm. Carlsen is not a strategist and not a thinker – he is a performer, like an engineer finding the solutions to specific problems. And his play resembles the output graph of an atomic power station – constant and high. Although his play lacks fantastic moves and discoveries, it is staggering in its logic and composure. It is as though he has no nerves – the typical character of a northerner. But perhaps it is not just a question of this? Not without reason, at the conclusion of the Nanjing tournament of 2009, the 2nd-placed Topalov declared: 'I was the winner among people, but Carlsen is simply from another planet!' There you have an explanation, which does not make the Carlsen enigma any more understandable.

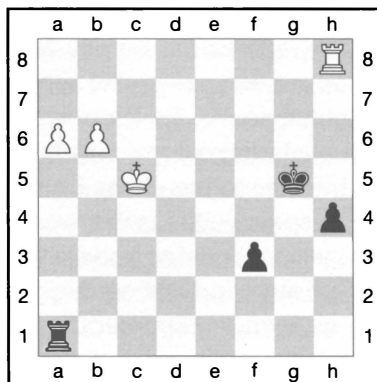
All these best qualities of the young Norwegian are what we have tried to present in his games. Through the chronology of the games we wanted to show the development of the most talented player from the West, and to compare Magnus at the formation stage with the modern Magnus. Of course, there are many aspects to his play and in the framework of one book it is impossible to encompass



the unbounded. Therefore we will restrict ourselves to just one component of his play, a very important indicator of playing strength – the ability to play the endgame, which has invariably distinguished the great champions of the past.

It is well known that, especially with the modern strict time control, the endgame can be difficult for young players, and here they commit far more mistakes than in the middlegame. There are various reasons for this: a lack of knowledge of standard positions, a poor mastery of typical manoeuvres and, it goes without saying, ignorance of classic examples. These gaps are not easy to eliminate, and here the serious assistance of a trainer is needed. Therefore it will be interesting for students of chess to see not only Magnus's mistakes when he was a youngster, but also how he was able to correct them, and on what he is still continuing to work. At the present time his technique of converting an advantage in the endgame resembles that of Fischer, and it rarely misfires – an indication of the serious work he has done. The defence of inferior positions is another matter – according to the definition of Botvinnik, it is this quality of a player that indicates his strength of play in the endgame. And here, as was once the case with Fischer, Magnus has had many problems. But, as the examples will show, he is well aware of this deficiency and is working actively to eliminate it. It can now be said that, whereas in the initial stage of Carlsen's career the endgame was the weak aspect of his play, now we can talk about his superiority over other grandmasters who have crossed the 2700 rating mark. His latest tournaments have demonstrated this.

G. Kacheishvili – M. Carlsen Bad Wiessee 2001



57...Ra5+?

If possible, one should normally begin by advancing a passed pawn – 57...f2!, and only then decide what to do next. 58. Rg8+ ♜h5 59. Rf8 Ra5+ 60. ♜d4 Rxa6 61. b7 Rb6 would have led to a draw.

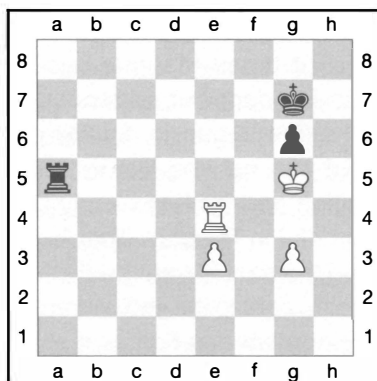
58. ♜d4 Rxa6?

It was not yet too late for 58...f2.

59. b7 Rb6 60. b8♚ Rxb8 61. Rxb8 ♜f4 62. Rf8+ ♜g3 63. ♜e3

Black resigned.

M. Maki Uuro – M. Carlsen Helsinki 2002





56. ♖f4 ♖a1 57. ♖b4 ♖f1+ 58. ♖g4
♖e1 59. e4 ♖f6 60. ♖b6+ ♖g7 61. ♖f4
♖f1+?

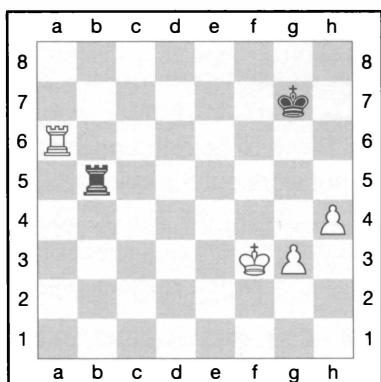
Anything, except release the attack on the passed pawn! 61...♖h6 or 61...♖f7 would have enabled Black to fight for a draw.

62. ♖g5 ♖f3 63. g4 ♖e3 64. ♖xg6+
♖f7 65. ♖f6+ ♖e7 66. ♖f4 ♖e6 67. ♖g6
♖e5 68. ♖f8 ♖a3 69. g5 ♖xe4 70. ♖g7
♖e5 71. g6 ♖g3 72. ♖h7 ♖h3+ 73. ♖g8
♖e6 74. g7 ♖g3 75. ♖f1 ♖e7 76. ♖e1+
♖d7 77. ♖e4

And by constructing a 'bridge', White won.

M. Carlsen – D. Kedik

Norwegian Under-18 Championship 2002



48. g4?

First the way for the king should have been secured – 48. ♖a4.

48... ♖b3+ 49. ♖f4 ♖b4+ 50. ♖f5 ♖b5+
51. ♖e6 ♖b4!

It is important not to allow the pawns to advance! Subsequently Black demonstrates the same mechanism.

52. ♖a7+ ♖h6 53. ♖f5 ♖b5+ 54. ♖f6
♖b6+ 55. ♖f7 ♖f6+!

It is useful to make use of the 'desperado' rook to drive the king away from the pawns. With the king cut off, it is easier to blockade the pawns.

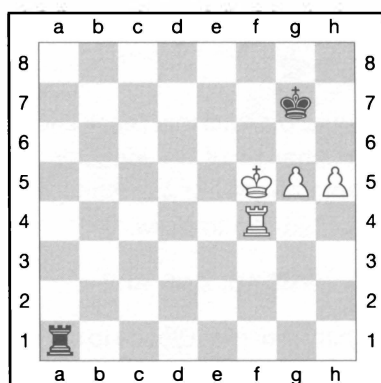
56. ♖e8 ♖f4! 57. g5+ ♖h5 58. ♖h7+
♖g6 59. ♖h6+ ♖g7 60. h5 ♖e4+
61. ♖d7 ♖e5 62. ♖g6+ ♖h7 63. ♖d6
♖a5 64. ♖c7 ♖e5 65. ♖d7 ♖a5 66. ♖e6
♖a6+ 67. ♖f5 ♖xg6

Draw.

After the lesson in this game, all Magnus could do was to remember for ever the method of 'hitching' the rook to the king and the passed pawns. A year later he himself saved a similar ending.

F. Bindrich – M. Carlsen

European Under-14 Championship
Budva 2003



76. ♖f3 ♖h1 77. ♖g4 ♖g1+ 78. ♖g3 ♖a1
79. ♖c3 ♖g1+ 80. ♖g3 ♖a1 81. ♖d3
♖g1+ 82. ♖f4 ♖f1+ 83. ♖g4 ♖g1+
84. ♖f3 ♖f1+ 85. ♖g2 ♖f5 86. ♖g3 ♖a5
87. ♖h3 ♖a1 88. ♖b3 ♖h1+ 89. ♖g4
♖g1+ 90. ♖f4 ♖f1+ 91. ♖f3 ♖h1 92. ♖f5
♖xh5 93. ♖a3 ♖h1 94. ♖a7+ ♖f8
95. ♖g6 ♖g1 96. ♖a8+ ♖e7 97. ♖h6?!

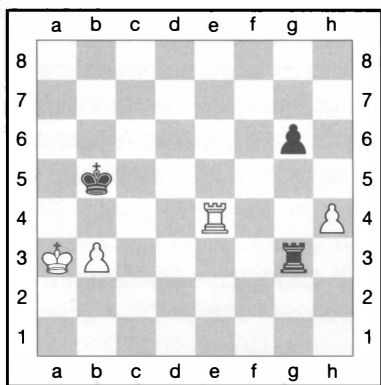


There was a win by 97. ♖g8!, intending ♜h7 and g5–g6, a manoeuvre which is useful to remember.

Bindrich did not in fact find this manoeuvre (although the possibility presented itself several times), and the game ended in a draw on the 115th move.

D. Pavasovic – M. Carlsen

Wijk aan Zee C 2004



44...♖g2?

Surely it was obvious that Black should aim for the exchange of the kingside pawns. The simple 44...♜c6! 45. ♜b4 g5 would have enabled him to draw.

45. ♖e5+ ♜b6 46. ♖g5 ♖h2

The exchange of rooks leads to a lost pawn ending.

46...♖h2 47. ♖xg6+ ♜b5 48. ♖g5+ ♜b6 49. ♖h5 ♖g2 50. ♜a4 ♖f2 51. ♖h6+ ♜b7 52. b4

The winning technique is simple and instructive.

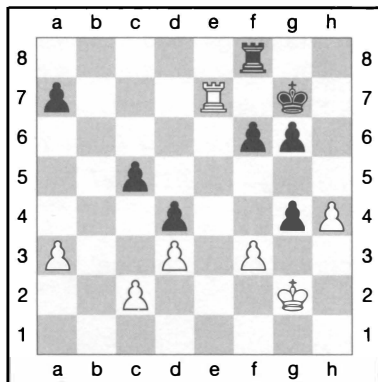
52...♖f5 53. h5 ♖e5 54. b5 ♖e1 55. ♖f6 ♖a1+ 56. ♜b4 ♖b1+ 57. ♜c5 ♖c1+

58. ♜d6 ♜b6 59. ♖f5

Black resigned.

E. Rozentalis – M. Carlsen

Malmö/Copenhagen 2004



29...♜h6?

The offer to exchange rooks – 29...♖f7! 30. ♖xf7+ ♜xf7 31. f×g4 – would have enabled Black to hold the position. Magnus did not work out the elementary pawn ending: 31...♜e6!? 32. ♜g3 f5 33. h5 f×g4 34. h×g6 ♜f6, since in the event of 34. h6? ♜f7 35. ♜xg4 ♜g8 it is Black who wins.

30. f×g4 c4 31. ♜f3 c×d3 32. c×d3 ♖c8 33. ♜f4 g5+ 34. h×g5+ f×g5+ 35. ♜e4 ♖c1 36. ♜×d4 ♖g1 37. ♖e4 ♖a1 38. ♜c5 ♖×a3 39. d4 ♜g6

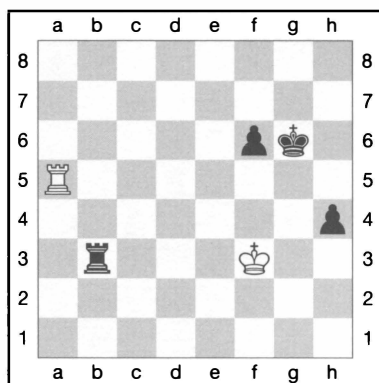
Things would not have been changed by 39...a5 40. d5 ♖c3+ 41. ♜b6 ♖d3 42. ♜c6 ♖c3+ 43. ♜d7.

40. d5 ♖c3+ 41. ♜b5 ♜f6 42. d6 ♖d3 43. ♜c6 a5 44. d7 ♖c3+ 45. ♜b7 ♖b3+ 46. ♜c7 ♖c3+ 47. ♜d8 ♜f7 48. ♖e7+ ♜f8 49. ♖e5

Black resigned. He has no defence against the check on f5 and then ♜e7.



M. Carlsen – L. Aronian
FIDE World Championship
Tripoli 2004



This position occurred in the first game of the tie-break. It is well known that rook endings with f- and h-pawns offer the weaker side real saving chances. And the fact that this was a rapid-play game is no excuse for Carlsen being unable to save the game. A top-class grandmaster is obliged to know key endgame positions.

In endings of this type the best squares for the king are considered to be f2 and g2. Here 66. ♔g2 suggests itself, aiming to block the h-pawn, and leaving the rook the option of checking along the rank and along the file (the best square for it is a8). But there followed:

66. ♔g4?! h3

and it transpired that, since the win of the h3-pawn leads to a lost pawn ending, it has become more difficult to hold the position.

67. ♖g5+?

This trick, based on stalemate – 67...fxg5? – leads to defeat. 67. ♖a2 f5+ 68. ♔f4 would have held the position, intending after 68...♖b8 to play 69. ♖a6+ ♔h5 70. ♔g3

♖b3+ 71. ♔h2 or immediately 69. ♔g3 ♖h8 70. ♔h2.

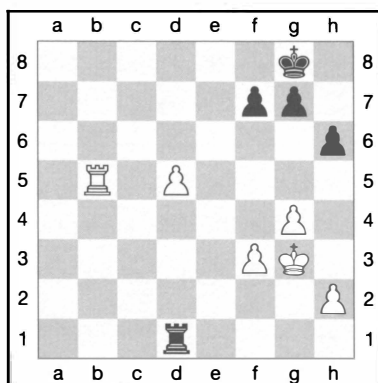
**67...♔f7 68. ♖h5 ♔e6 69. ♖h8 ♖c3
70. ♔f4 ♔f7 (70...♖c2!) 71. ♔g4 ♔g6
72. ♔f4 ♖c2!**

The conversion technique is instructive. Since 73. ♖xh3 ♖f4+ leads to the exchange of rooks, the pawn continues its advance, and the king makes an outflanking manoeuvre.

**73. ♔g3 h2 74. ♔f3 ♔f5 75. ♖h5+
♔e6 76. ♖h8 ♔e5 77. ♖e8+ ♔d4
78. ♖d8+ ♔c3 79. ♖h8 ♖d2
80. ♔g3 ♔d3 81. ♔f3 ♔c2 82. ♔g3
♔d1**

White resigned.

A. Onischuk – M. Carlsen
Olympiad, Calvia 2004



Black should be able to hold such an ending – ing a pawn down, but Magnus has no clear impression of how to defend.

44...♔f8 45. h4 g6 46. ♔f4 f6?

Such a move is simply inconceivable for a grandmaster. An obvious gap in Magnus's 'schooling'. 46...♔e7 47. g5 hxg5+ 48. hxg5



f6!, reducing the number of pawns, was correct.

47. h5!

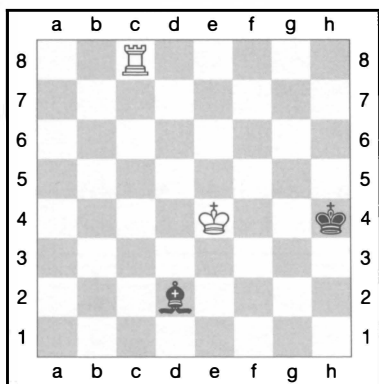
Now holes appear in Black's position.

**47...♟f7 48. ♖b7+ ♜g8 49. ♞e4 g×h5
50. g×h5 ♟f8 51. ♖h7 ♖e1+ 52. ♟f5
♟g8 53. ♖d7 ♖f1 54. f4 ♟f8 55. d6
♟e8 56. ♖h7 ♖d1 57. ♞e6**

Black resigned.

C. Pedersen – M. Carlsen

Gausdal 2005



This is a theoretically drawn endgame, but you have to know the defensive procedure.

91. ♖c2 ♜b4 92. ♖c4 ♜e7 93. ♟f4 ♟h5

It is correct to head for the corner of the opposite colour to the bishop – 93...♟h3.

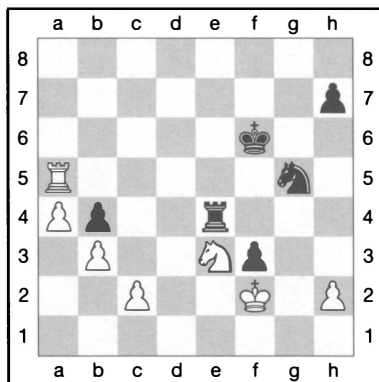
94. ♟f5 ♜d8??

If chess notation allowed it, this move would deserve a greater number of question marks. The simple 94...♟h6 would have enabled Black to draw.

95. ♖c8

Black resigned.

M. Carlsen – G. Kamsky World Cup, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005



White is a pawn up with a winning position. All that is required is a certain accuracy.

**41. ♖a6+ ♞e5 42. ♖h6 ♖d4 43. ♜c4+
♟f5 44. h4 ♜f7 45. ♖b6?!**

45. ♖xh7? was not possible because of the loss of the rook after 45...♟g6!, but by playing 45. ♜e3+ ♞e4 (45...♟e5 46. ♖xh7) 46. ♖e6+ ♜e5 47. ♜c4 White would have won easily.

45...♖xh4 46. ♖xb4

And here 46. ♟g3! ♖h1 47. ♟xf3 would have led to the win of the f3-pawn.

46...♖h3 47. a5 ♜g5 48. a6??

This elementary oversight changes the picture. Now White is losing, although a simple knight manoeuvre – 48. ♜e3+ and 49. ♜g4 – would have enabled him to queen his a-pawn in comfort.

48...♜e4+ 49. ♞e3 f2+ 50. ♞e2 ♖c3?

50...♖f3! would have won immediately.

51. ♜d2?

The comedy of errors continues. After 51. ♟f1! White would again have won:

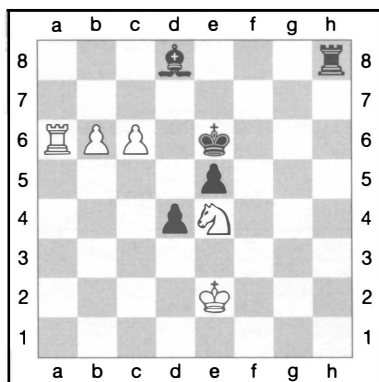


51...♖f3 52. ♔d6+ ♕x d6 53. a7.

51...♖xc2 52. ♖d4 ♕x d2 53. ♖d5+ ♜e6

White resigned.

M. Carlsen – A. Adly
Reykjavik 2006



White's pair of passed pawns is obviously more promising than Black's. But with which pawn should he begin? It is not hard to calculate that in the event of 55. c7 ♕xc7 56. bxc7+ ♔d7 57. ♖a7 ♜c6 58. ♔d3 ♜b6 White loses his pawns, and it will be a draw. Therefore Magnus begins with the other pawn, but he reaches an impasse. The truth is revealed within three moves.

55. b7?!

This advance should have been prepared by bringing up the king – 55. ♔d3!. Now, however, Black succeeds in neutralising the pawn pair.

55...♕c7 56. ♖a8 ♖b8 57. ♔d3

After 57. ♕c5+ ♔d5 58. ♕a6 White loses his passed pawns: 58...♜xc6! 59. ♕xb8+ ♜xb7 and the result is a draw.

57...♔d5

By attacking the pawn, Black releases his rook. White is short of one move, which could have been provided by the far-sighted 55. ♔d3.

58. ♖a6?

White should have exchanged rooks, after which his knight blockades the pawn pair, guaranteeing a draw. Now the black pawns become dangerous.

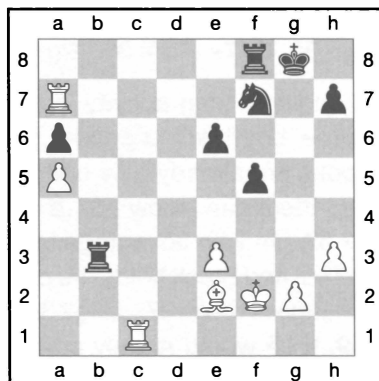
58...♖f8 59. ♕d2 e4+! 60. ♕xe4 ♖f3+ 61. ♜c2 ♜xe4 62. ♖a8 ♖c3+ 63. ♔d1 ♖b3 64. ♜c2

After 64. ♖c8 Black casts a mating net around the enemy king: 64...♕f4 65. c7 ♖xb7 66. ♖e8+ ♔d3.

64...♖b6 65. ♖c8 d3+ 66. ♔d1 ♕f4 67. ♖e8+ ♜f3 68. b8♖ ♖xb8

White resigned.

M. Carlsen – A. Naiditsch
Sarajevo 2006



White's position is close to winning, but he still has to make a few accurate moves.

29. ♖cc7?!



Material would have been won by 29. ♖xa6 ♜g5 30. ♙c4 ♜e4+ 31. ♜f3 ♜d2+ 32. ♜e2 ♖b2 (after the exchange of the minor pieces White has a won rook ending) 33. ♙xe6+ ♜h8 34. ♖b6.

29...♖b2 30. h4?!

A pointless move. The king should have been brought into play: 30. ♜e1 ♖b1+ 31. ♜d2 ♖b2+ 32. ♖c2, retaining winning chances. Now Black succeeds in beginning counterplay.

30...♜g7!

Before the second rook is activated, the king must be moved out of the danger zone. In the event of 30...♖d8 31. ♖xf7 ♖dd2 32. ♖f7 a linear mate is threatened, and Black cannot play 32...♖xe2+ 33. ♜f1 ♖f2+ 34. ♜e1 ♖fe2+ 35. ♜d1.

31. ♖xa6 ♖d8 32. ♖aa7 ♖dd2 33. ♖xf7+ ♜g6 34. h5+

The consequences of 34. ♜f3 ♖xe2 35. ♜f4 ♖b4+ 36. ♜e5 ♖xe3+ 37. ♜d6 ♖d4+ 38. ♜e7 ♖xh4 are unclear.

34...♜g5 35. ♖g7+ ♜h4! 36. ♜g1?!

In rook endings, king activity is of great importance, but it would appear that the black rooks are already fully operational. If 36. ♜f3 there can follow 36...♖xe2 (not 36...e5? 37. g4! with advantage to White) 37. ♜f4 ♖b5! and Black holds the position. The exchange of rooks 37...♖xg2 38. ♖xg2 ♖xg2 39. ♜e5 would merely complicate his defence.

36...♖xe2 37. ♖ab7?

As a result, after being a pawn up, White loses two. But also after 37. ♖ad7 ♖a2! he cannot hope for anything.

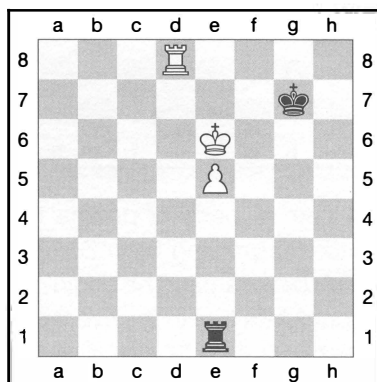
37...♖xg2+ 38. ♖xg2 ♖xb7 39. ♖a2

39. h6 ♖a7 40. ♖g7 ♖xa5 41. ♖xh7 ♜h5 also leads to a draw.

39...♜xh5 40. a6 ♖a7 41. ♜f2 ♜g4 42. ♖a4+ ♜g5 43. ♜f3 e5 44. ♖a5 ♜f6 45. ♜g3 ♜e6 46. ♜h4 ♜f6

Draw.

L. Aronian – M. Carlsen Tal Memorial Tournament Moscow 2006



A theoretically drawn position. Magnus knew – and had employed earlier in similar positions – the method of keeping the pawn under fire: 69...♖e2!. Instead of this he prefers another plan of defence: attacking with the rook from the long side, which proves to be more complicated.

69...♖a1 70. ♜e7 ♖a5 71. e6 ♖a7+ 72. ♖d7 ♖a8 73. ♖d6 ♖a7+

In the flank attack one must not give up the 8th rank. 73...♜g6 was the only defence.

74. ♜e8

Black resigned.



It has to be said that Carlsen drew the conclusions from the deficiencies of his play in endings, and the consequences of the work he put it soon became apparent. Already at the Olympiad in Turin (2006) he demonstrated endgame play on a grand scale against Adams (No. 18), where he converted the advantage of the two bishops.

The year 2007 proved exceptionally productive. There was the impressive conversion of an extra pawn in an endgame with rooks and opposite-colour bishops in a game with Morozovich (No. 21). There was an admirable depth of ideas in the endings from the 3rd and 5th games of his Candidates match with Aronian (Nos. 23 and 24), in which with subtle manoeuvres Magnus was able to confine the enemy king in a 'box'. The finish to his game with Onischuk (No. 26), where his knights restricted the mobility of a rook, also invites inclusion in the books. At the World Cup in Khanty-Mansiysk, in his game with Adams (No. 31) Magnus again showed brilliant technique in

converting the advantage of the two bishops in a complicated multi-piece endgame. Also instructive is the finish to the game with Cheparinov (No. 32), where literally by nuances Carlsen was able to outplay an active rook with his bishop and knight.

Also impressive were some masterpieces by Carlsen early in 2008. In Wijk aan Zee there was a nice finish to his game with Eljanov (No. 33), where he subtly coordinated his rooks and knight. A special place goes to his win over the world champion Kramnik (No. 34) – Magnus was able to construct another 'box' for the king. At the end of the year in Bilbao he added to the textbook collection of heavy-piece endings: he was able to convert an outside passed pawn in a heavy piece endgame with Aronian (No. 43). Of the games from 2009 mention should be made of his subtle handling of the endgame against Jakovenko (No. 52), in which Magnus was able to exploit some imperceptible errors by the opponent in an equal position.

Chapter 1

From Master to Grandmaster

Gifted young players have always drawn the attention of both admirers of the ancient game and of recognised experts. During the active development of chess over the last century and a half, young talents who have gone on to achieve an outstanding level of play can be counted literally in single figures. As for recent times, the record belongs to the Ukraine-born Sergey Karjakin, who became a grandmaster at the age of 12. Such is the trend of the times, the age of technical progress. Universal computerisation has become a kind of accelerator in the development of the new chess generation. Chess databases and modern analytical modules enable young talents to acquire the necessary knowledge far more quickly, and lack of experience in the development of tactical and strategic understanding is compensated by a computer-like calculation of variations. Whereas 30 years ago, according to the picturesque expression of Tigran Petrosian, young players emerging into the chess arena were called 'children of Informator', now they are called 'children of the computer'. Therefore rumours about the young Norwegian boy Magnus Carlsen, who displayed outstanding chess talent at an equally early age as Sergey Karjakin, quickly spread around the chess world.

But in 2002 it was the Ukrainian youngster who reigned supreme. The height of his fame came at a tournament of the Grand Prix series, held in Moscow, where one of the authors of this book participated in the capacity of arbiter. The spectators who arrived at the Mezhdunarodnaya Hotel were able to observe a curious picture. On an empty stage the last pair were continuing to battle: literally impending over a frail lad with his touching little quiff was a bearded hunk of a man. The experienced Ilya Smirin needed 140 (!) moves to overcome the resistance of the 12-year-old Seryozha Karjakin. This was their second game with the classical time control; in the first the grandmaster had managed to save a hopeless position a rook down by means of perpetual check.

At that time Seryozha's contemporary – Magnus – was still at the start of his career, although at the age of eleven he was able to share 1st–2nd places in the Norwegian Under-18 Championship. However, he did not distinguish himself at the European Under-12 Championship in Spain, where he finished only sixth. But in the world championship among his contemporaries in Greece, Carlsen displayed his character and shared 1st–2nd places with Ian Nepomniachtchi, who on the tie-break was proclaimed world champion. Junior events at such a tender age do not usually cause much of a stir. This makes the almost improbable episode with Nepomniachtchi all the more curious. The emergence of the 12-year-old world champion made such an impression on one of the major Russian Newspapers *Izvestiya*, that it decided to sponsor him, overlooking that he was merely the best player among his contemporaries. True,



soon the sponsorship came to nothing, since Ian Nepomniachtchi disappeared into the general mass of Russian players.

It is possible, therefore, that in post-Soviet chess they learned about the Norwegian prodigy only in 2003, when the magazine *64 – Shakhmatnoe obozrenie* reported that in Scandinavia there was a shining new 12-year-old master by the name of Carlsen. First he shared 3rd–7th places in the Norwegian Championship, and then he distinguished himself in the Politiken Cup tournament in Copenhagen. This was the first prestigious tournament in the world chess calendar in which Carlsen took part. The influential Danish *Politiken* newspaper has already staged it 25 times, traditionally providing a solid prize fund. This attracts strong players, and it is sufficient to recall that among the winners have been such famous names as Smyslov, Korchnoi and Vaganian. The young Norwegian also distinguished himself in Copenhagen, scoring 8 points out of 11 games and finishing only a point behind the winner Krishnan Sasikiran. Starting with a rating of 2385, Carlsen demonstrated a strength of play corresponding to a performance of 2500 (it should be mentioned that Karjakin already had this official rating). In that period the foundation was laid of the mastery that Magnus demonstrated both in attack on the king, and in positional play.

Carlsen's 'visiting card' in Copenhagen was a spectacular mating attack in his game with Harestad.

Game 1

M. Carlsen – H. Harestad

Copenhagen 2003

Ruy Lopez [C98]

1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♘c6 3. ♙b5 a6 4. ♙a4
 ♜f6 5. 0–0 b5 6. ♙b3 ♙e7 7. ♞e1 d6
 8. c3 0–0 9. h3 ♜a5 10. ♙c2 c5 11. d4
 ♚c7

The classical Chigorin Variation of the Ruy Lopez.

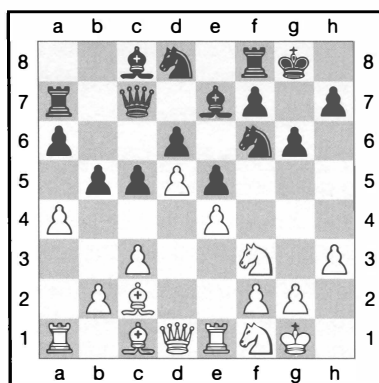
12. ♜bd2 ♘c6 13. d5 ♜d8 14. a4 ♞a7

Black does not want to concede the a-file. However, the presence of the rook on a7 allows White to play b2–b4 in a more favourable situation. The main continuation here is 14...♞b8.

15. ♜f1 g6

If 15...h6, then 16. ♙e3 with the idea of

b2–b4 is possible.



16. ♙h6

16. b4!? cxb4 17. cxb4 ♙d7 18. ♙e3 ♞b7
 19. axb5 ♙xb5 20. ♚d2 is more in the spirit of the position, with the better game for White.

16...♞e8 17. ♜g3

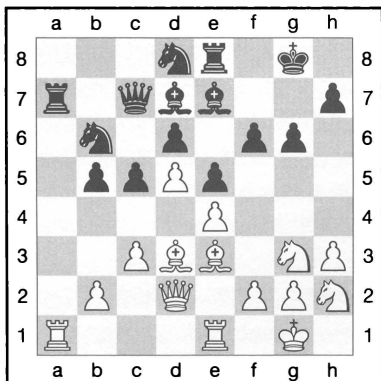


The preparatory 17. g4 should have been included.

17...♖d7 18. ♖h2

And here 18. b4 ♖f8 19. ♖e3 was more logical, maintaining the pawn tension.

**18...f6 19. ♖e3 ♖b6 20. axb5 axb5
21. ♖d3 ♖d7 22. ♖d2**



At the young age of 12 it is not easy to stay patient and engage in strategic manoeuvring, trying to find a vulnerable point in Black's solid defensive lines. But Magnus patiently bides his time.

**22...♖f7 23. ♖xa7 ♖xa7 24. ♖e2 ♖a6
25. ♖g4 ♖g7**

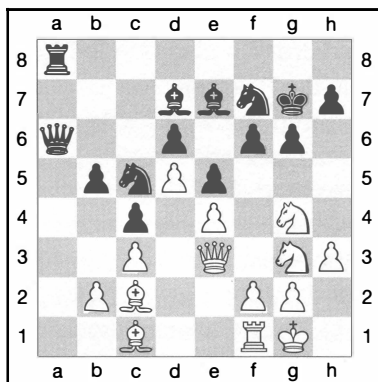
Black is not tempted by the provocative 25...h5?!, after which there can follow 26. ♖xh5! g×h5 27. ♖h6+ ♖xh6 28. ♖xh6 ♖f8 29. ♖xh5 ♖xh6 30. ♖xh6 ♖e7 31. ♖e3 ♖g7 32. ♖xf6, when White has three pawns for the piece and a continuing attack.

26. ♖c1 ♖a4 27. ♖c2 ♖a8 28. ♖e3 c4

Black could have continued his waiting strategy – 28...♖b6 29. ♖d3 ♖a4, but 28...♖xg4!? 29. h×g4 c4 also came into consideration, nipping in the bud White's

hopes involving ♖h6 and transferring his own knight to c5.

29. ♖f1 ♖c5



Somehow imperceptibly Carlsen has aimed his pieces at the kingside, but Black does not sense the danger. He continues to ignore the move 29...h5, although after it the black king would have been more safely placed than in the game. In the event of 30. ♖h6 ♖g5 31. f4 exf4 32. ♖xf4 ♖xh6 (not 32...♖xh3? because of 33. ♖xh5+! g×h5 34. e5! ♖f8 35. ♖f5+ ♖x5 36. ♖xf5 and White wins) 33. h4 ♖f8 Black safely withdraws his king.

30. ♖h6! ♖g5

Black should have restricted himself to the cool-headed exchange 30...♖xh6 31. ♖xh6+ ♖g8, with the intention of switching his bishop to g7.

31. f4! exf4 32. ♖xf4 ♖xh3?

Black is tempted by the win of a pawn, underestimating White's latent attacking resources. It was better to simplify the position: 32...♖xh6 33. h4 ♖f8 34. h×g5+ f×g5 35. ♖h4+ ♖g7 36. ♖xg5 ♖xf1+ 37. ♖xf1 ♖xg5 38. ♖xg5, although here too White's chances are preferable. Now,



however, Magnus succeeds in demonstrating the latent energy of his pieces in all its glory.

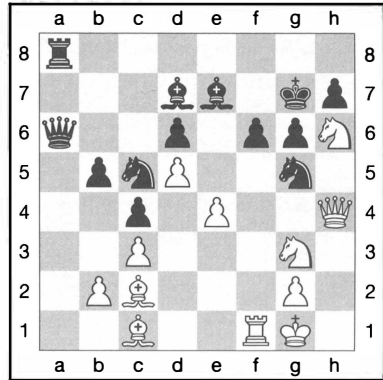
33. ♖h4 ♕d7

(see next diagram)

34. e5! dxe5 35. ♜h5+! g×h5

Now White announces mate in 3 moves.

But Black would also have lost after 35...♔h8 36. ♕×g5 f×g5 37. ♖g3!.



36. ♖×g5+! f×g5 37. ♖f7+ ♔×h6

38. ♖×h7 mate

Carlsen's successful performance in the Politiken Cup tournament greatly raised his self-esteem, and he was also noticed by the organisers of other tournaments. True, his performances in the 'compulsary program' among his contemporaries were not so successful. Competitive fatigue made itself felt. Especially vexing was the set-back at the European Under-14 Championship in Budva (Montenegro). When Magnus won against his main rival Sergey Zhigalko and took the lead with 6½ points after the 7th round, it appeared that the question of the champion was decided. But he contrived to lose both his last two games, in which he was winning, and finished only third.

Magnus also started confidently at the world championship in Halkidiki (Greece), scoring 3½ points in the first 4 rounds. But unforeseen circumstances prevented him from becoming champion. As Agdestein, who was accompanying him, described it, the air was literally buzzing with bacteria and Magnus became ill (his temperature reached 40 degrees). He nevertheless kept in the leading group until the 9th round, but on this occasion he lost to Zhigalko and had to be satisfied with a share of 9th-13th places (7½ out of 11). These set-backs were not accidental: a child's organism is still delicate, and since the 'compulsary program' for the year was over-generously combined with the 'free' one, by the end of the twelve months Magnus was very tired. This is not surprising – he had played about 150 games!

It is well known that in Norway since long ago they have long shown a great respect for their heroes, and they try to create the best conditions for the disclosure of their talent. Carlsen was no exception. At the age of ten he drew the attention of the Norwegian grandmaster Simen Agdestein, who in 2002 began working with the prodigy. Despite the comparative shortness of their lessons – twice a month spending 2–3 hours on the analysis of games played – their collaboration produced results. In 2003 Carlsen three times achieved the international master norm (the last time at the Politiken Cup tournament) and by the end of the year he had raised his rating to 2450.



Game 2

M. Carlsen – S. Zhigalko

European Under-14 Championship

Budva 2003

*Sicilian Defence [B33]***1. e4 c5 2. ♖f3 ♜c6 3. d4 cxd4****4. ♜xd4 ♜f6 5. ♜c3 e5**

Despite its apparently anti-positional nature, the Chelyabinsk Variation is still alive and has not been refuted. Among the elite players it is constantly employed, for example, by Radjabov and Shirov.

6. ♜db5 d6 7. ♔g5 a6 8. ♜a3 b5**9. ♔xf6**

At the present time White more often turns to the quieter line 9. ♜d5 ♔e7 10. ♔xf6 ♔xf6, and here 11. c3 or 11. c4.

9...gxf6 10. ♜d5 f5 11. ♔d3

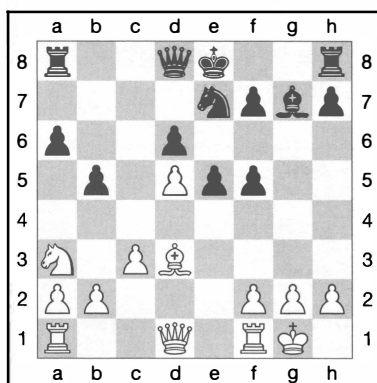
The alternative is 11. c3, to which Black should reply 11...♔g7, since the capture on e4 is bad in view of 11...fxe4 12. ♔xb5! axb5 13. ♜xb5, and against the threat of 14. ♜bc7+ ♜d7 15. ♔g4+ there is no satisfactory defence, while 11...♔e6? is pointless in view of 12. exf5 ♔xf5 13. ♔f3.

11...♔e6 12. 0-0 ♔xd5 13. exd5 ♜e7**14. c3**

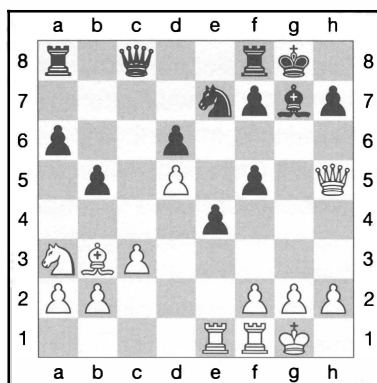
The capture 14. ♜xb5 ♔g7 15. ♜c3 e4 gives Black good compensation for the pawn.

14...♔g7*(see next diagram)***15. ♔h5**

Theory has gradually come to the conclusion that from the standpoint of fighting for an advantage 15. ♔e1 0-0 16. ♔h5 e4 17. ♔f1 is more promising.



**15...e4 16. ♔c2 ♔c8 17. ♔ae1 0-0
18. ♔b3**



In his commentary for *ChessBase*, Dorian Rogozenko rightly remarked that it is hard to think of a more natural move – the d5-pawn is defended and the manoeuvre ♜a3–c2 prepared. The direct 18. f3 gives Black the opportunity for rather easy equality: 18...b4 19. ♜b1 bxc3 20. ♜xc3 ♔xc3 21. bxc3 ♔xc3 22. ♔b1 ♜g6 23. ♔xf5 exf3 24. ♔xf3 ♔xf3 25. ♔xf3 ♔ae8 with a drawn endgame, as in Karen Asrian's game with Wang Yue (Khanty-Mansiysk 2005). However, for quite a long time the main continuation was considered to be 18. ♔h1 – until at the tournament in Dortmund (2002), in his game with Topalov, Leko employed the strong



novelty 18...♖b8!, aimed at creating quick counterplay on the queenside. It remains to add that after the immediate 18...b4 White has the unpleasant reply 19. cxb4 ♗xb2 20. ♖e3!.

In general, the character of the position is such that if both sides make the critical moves (which normally can be achieved only with the help of deep home preparation), the game most often concludes with the mutual elimination of the forces and a draw.

18...♗h8?!

Black has confused something – here this move is pointless. Let us briefly examine the other possibilities. Tournament practice has shown that after the quiet 18...♗g6 19. ♖c2 ♗f4 White's chances are preferable (if 19...♗f4 there is a dangerous exchange sacrifice: 20. ♖g5 ♗d3 21. ♗e3!). After 18...♖b8 White has time to consolidate his queenside – 19. ♖c2 a5 20. a3! after which he can calmly mount an offensive on the opposite side of the board.

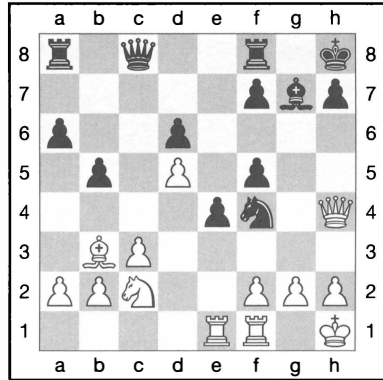
The only way to equalise is by the energetic 18...a5!, which occurred a few days later in the game Carlsen–McShane, which continued 19. ♗xb5 a4 20. ♗d1 ♖c5 21. ♗d4 ♖xd5 22. ♖e3 ♖e5 23. ♖h3 h6 24. f4 ♖f6 with dynamic equilibrium. If 19. ♖g5 the best is apparently 19...♖d7! 20. f3 ♗g6! 21. fxe4 f4 with excellent play for Black (Fernandez Romero–Eljanov, Andorra 2003).

19. ♗h1?!

On the emergence from the opening, both players have made decisions that are hard to understand, which, however, is easily explained in view of their youth and the complexity of the position. 19. ♖c2 ♗g6

20. f4 (planning ♗e3 and g2–g4) or even 19. f3!? was more logical.

19...♗g6 20. ♖c2 ♗f4 21. ♖h4



21...♗e5?!

It is strange that Black did not in fact carry out that for which he was obviously aiming: 21...♗d3, after which White would probably have had to give up a rook for the powerful knight. However, his compensation would have been sufficient: 22. ♖e3 ♖d8! 23. ♖h3 ♖g5 24. ♖xd3 exd3 25. ♖xd3 f4!, and the position is unclear.

22. ♗e3

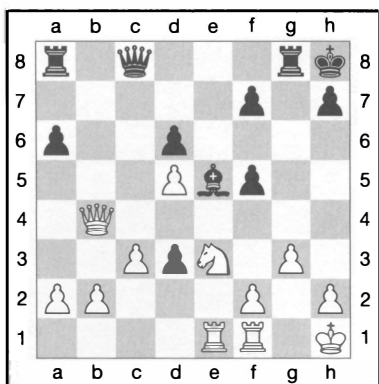
Now, as if by schedule, the white pieces arrive at the necessary posts.

22...♖g8 23. ♗c2! b4 24. g3 ♗d3

The opponent's initiative after 24...♗g6!? 25. ♖h5 bxc3 26. bxc3 (or 26. b3!? f4 27. ♗f5) 26...♗xc3 27. ♖d1 seemed too dangerous to Zhigalko, and so he decided to give up a pawn.

25. ♗xd3 exd3 26. ♖xb4

(see next diagram)

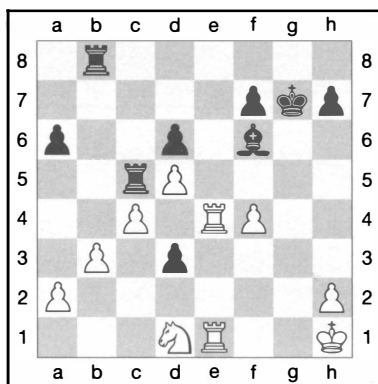


retained the advantage. Now, however, Carlsen retains the d5-pawn with the help of a 'little combination'.

34. c4! ♖g7

If 34...♙xb2 there follows 35. ♖e8+.

35. b3



White has set up a seemingly indestructible monolith, but, strangely enough, Black still has some drawing chances.

35...♙a5

35...a5 36. ♖a4e3 d2 37. ♖1e2 was hopeless for Black.

36. ♖g1+ ♕f8 37. ♖g2 ♙a3!

The two players are as though competing in inventiveness. Zhigalko persistently tries to break through the obstructive barriers, skilfully erected by Carlsen in the path of the black pieces.

38. ♖e3 ♖e8

If 38...a5, then 39. ♖xd3 a4 40. ♖dg3 ♕e7 41. bxa4 ♖xa4 42. ♖b3!, and White should gradually convert his two extra pawns.

39. ♖d2!

An accurate move, enabling the knight to be

White is still a long way from a trouble-free conversion of his advantage – it is no easy matter to suppress the typical 'Chelyabinsk' activity of the enemy pieces. However, from this moment Magnus begins demonstrating mature technique beyond his years.

26...♖b8 27. ♖c4!

27. ♖a3? would have lost to 27...f4 28. ♖g2 f×g3 29. f×g3 ♙×g3!.

27...f4!

It is not possible to regain the material: 27...♙xb2 28. ♖xd3, or 27...d2 28. ♖b1.

28. ♖xc8 ♖gxc8 29. ♖d1! ♖c5 30. g×f4

30. ♖e4! was more accurate: 30...♖xd5 (or 30...f×g3 31. f×g3 with the same idea of soon surrounding the d3-pawn) 31. g×f4.

30...♙×f4 31. ♖e4 ♙e5 32. f4 ♙g7!

Better than 32...♙f6.

33. ♖fe1

Or 33. ♖f3 ♖xd5 34. ♖ee3 ♙h6!.

33...♙f6

33...h5 was possible, although after 34. ♕g2 ♖xd5 35. ♕f3 White would have



activated with gain of tempo. 39. ♖xe8?! ♜xe8 40. ♖d2 a5 41. ♜f2 a4 was weaker.

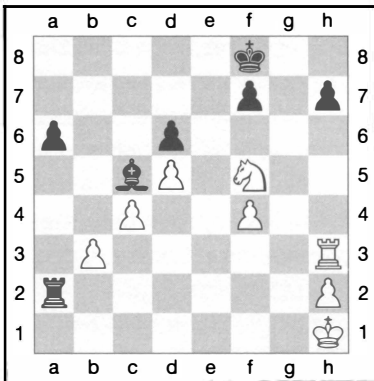
39...♖xe3 40. ♜xe3 ♖d4 41. ♜f5

After 41. ♖xd3 ♖xe3 42. ♖xe3 ♖xa2 the win for White is in question, since his king is badly placed.

41...♖c5 42. ♖xd3

42. ♜g2! ♖b4 43. ♖xd3 ♖xa2+ 44. ♜g3 was more methodical, bringing the king into play.

42...♖xa2 43. ♖h3



43...♜g8?

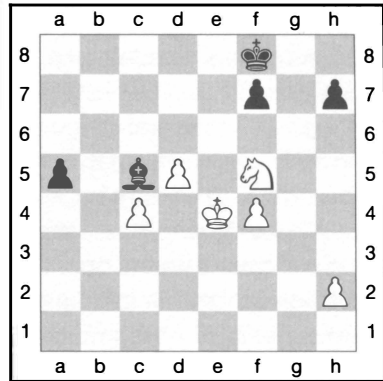
Black should have played 43...♖f2! 44. ♖xh7 (44. ♖h6? ♖xf4 45. ♜xd6? ♜g7) 44...♜g8 45. ♖h3 ♖xf4 46. ♜e7+ ♜g7 (46...♜f8 47. ♜c6) 47. ♜g2 (or 47. ♜c6), and although with best play White should win, he would have to overcome technical difficulties.

44. ♖h6!

With the fall of the d6-pawn, Black's entire position collapses. However, accurate calculation is still required of White.

44...♖a1+ 45. ♜g2 ♖a2+ 46. ♜f3 ♖a3 47. ♜xd6 ♖xb3+ 48. ♜e4 ♖b6 49. ♜f5

♖xh6 50. ♜xh6+ ♜f8 51. ♜f5 a5



52. d6!

The timid 52. ♜d3? a4 53. ♜c3 ♜e8 would have delayed the win, although probably would not have thrown it away.

52...a4 53. ♜d5 ♖b4

If 53...a3, then 54. ♜xc5 ♜e8 (54...a2 55. d7) 55. ♜d4 a2 56. ♜b3.

54. c5 ♜e8 55. c6 ♖a5 56. ♜c4

Of course, there was no point in playing 56. c7? ♖xc7 57. dxc7 ♜d7, since a knight is bad at combatting a passed rook's pawn. Now Black is in zugzwang.

56...♜d8 57. ♜e7 h5 58. f5 h4 59. h3 f6 60. ♜d5 a3 61. ♜b3

Black resigned.

This far from faultless but entertaining game is a good illustration of Magnus's ability from his youngest years to create positions in which mistakes are practically inevitable. In so doing, he normally makes fewer mistakes in them than his opponents.



The lessons of 2003 were not wasted. During this time Carlsen changed little in the way he worked to improve his standard of play. He still preferred to do this independently, devoting to it five hours a day. Apart from working at the board, he also read chess books with great pleasure. True, the range of them was very specific, but here it is better to hand over to his father, Henrik Carlsen.

‘Magnus has looked at many games comprising the classical heritage of chess, including all the games from Kasparov’s books *My Great Predecessors*, which he literally devoured and of which he remembers practically everything. He reads a lot: *Fire on Board* by Shirov, Kramnik’s best games, fundamental works on the endgame and, of course, many books on the openings. I should also add the *New in Chess* magazines and Yearbooks and other interesting chess magazines. Without any difficulty Magnus combines reading of chess material and its simultaneous analysis. In the first years of his chess career he spent a lot of time moving the pieces on the board, repeating games and remembering ideas he had seen. But in the last two years he has mainly been analysing in his head.’

There are those who like to talk about Carlsen’s lack of ‘schooling’, but I should like to remind them of the possibility of studying by correspondence. As regards its effectiveness, everything is decided by motivation. There are numerous examples of this. Besides, can one talk about a lack of ‘schooling’, when you have such a prestigious trainer as Simen Agdestein?

Graduates of the Soviet chess school and their followers improve their mastery by studying the classical heritage of the great world champions – Lasker, Capablanca, Alekhine and Botvinnik, and researchers such as Tarrasch, Nimzowitsch and Réti. To them it may seem amazing how, without reading a single book by these classics, Carlsen independently achieved such a high level of chess understanding. At the time such a thing seemed impossible. For example, Tigran Petrosian liked to remember his youth, when he kept a copy of Nimzowitsch’s book *My System* under his pillow. But, as we learned earlier, Magnus absorbed the best of the classical heritage from Kasparov’s five-volume *My Great Predecessors*. As for the speed of assimilating material, present-day geniuses have their resources. In the computer age it is hard to imagine a 13-year-old boy who does not spend hours on a computer. Carlsen was no different, using the computer as his main helper in preparing for tournaments. As he matured the efficiency increased, his opening repertoire expanded, and he perfected his ability to make a deep study of his opponents’ play and find their weak points.

Magnus began the year 2004 well prepared. One of the pillars of the world chess calendar is the traditional festival in the small Dutch town of Wijk aan Zee. It is famous not only for its main A Tournament, which year after year assembles almost the entire chess elite, but also its less prestigious B and C all-play-all tournaments, enabling young talents stage by stage to make their way into chess high society. And to begin with the C tournament, even a FIDE category 9 – modest by today’s standards – is quite natural for a young matador. Carlsen’s debut created a genuine furore! He not only won with a score of 10½ from 13 games, but also exceeded the international grandmaster norm



by 1½ points. The sharp and energetic attacking style of the 13-year-old Norwegian testified to the appearance of a new star on the chess horizon. Professionals began talking about him. The highly experienced grandmaster Ljubomir Kavalek, who in his time had seen many talents, saw Carlsen as a ‘Chess Mozart’. He was echoed by Evgeny Bebchuk, who in the 1990s was head of the Russian Chess Federation: ‘As a person closely acquainted with the play of all the great grandmasters, I can confidently say that in the history of chess no one has played like this at the age of 13.’

The game with international master Sipke Ernst, played at a key moment of the fight for the first prize, not only captivated those who value brilliancy, but gave a slight insight into the secrets of Magnus’s home laboratory in work with a computer. To a question, whether the attack on the king was the result of preparation or the fruit of inspiration, he replied: ‘I knew that 17. ♖e2 was the theoretical move, but I didn’t remember the variations, so I thought about it for some 25 minutes, trying to understand the position. I saw the knight move 18. ♖g6 in the game Bologan–Anand (Dortmund 2003). You can decide for yourself whether it was imagination or home preparation!’

It would not be out of place to mention: ideas in themselves do not hover in the air. The patent on the knight move to g6 in this variation belongs to Alexander Beliavsky, who twice used it to defeat the famous ‘Danish prince’ Bent Larsen in 1981 and 1984, at the tournament in Tilburg and in the USSR v. Rest of the World match. (The inquisitive reader is referred to Beliavsky’s book *Uncompromising Chess*).

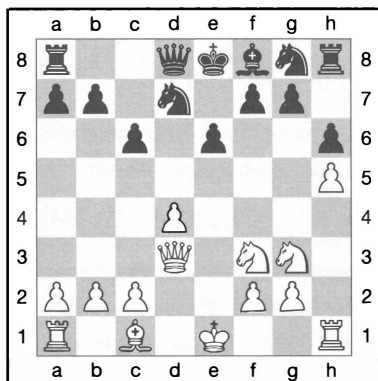
Game 3

M. Carlsen – S. Ernst

Wijk aan Zee C 2004

Caro-Kann Defence [B19]

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. ♖c3 dxe4 4. ♖xe4
 ♙f5 5. ♖g3 ♙g6 6. h4 h6 7. ♖f3 ♖d7
 8. h5 ♙h7 9. ♙d3 ♙xd3 10. ♖xd3 e6



11. ♙f4

At one time 11. ♙d2 was also played, since Black’s main reaction was considered to be the set-up with queenside castling. But in recent years he has often preferred kingside castling, and in this case the bishop is more actively placed at f4.

11...♖gf6

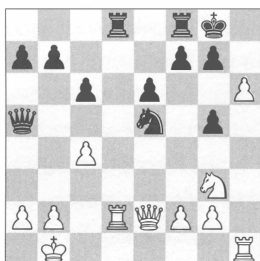
If he wants to carry out the plan with queenside castling, Black can play 11...♖a5+, provoking 12. ♙d2 (12. c3 makes it easier for him to develop counterplay with ...c6–c5), and then retreat 12...♖c7.

12. 0–0–0 ♙e7 13. ♖e4

A popular move, which has the aim in the event of 13...0–0 of attacking the king’s position with the g-pawn – 14. ♖xf6+ ♖xf6

15. g4, as in the game Shirov–Dreev (Dos Hermanas 2003).

Before this 13. ♖e5 used to be played. The problems that Black encountered are well demonstrated by the game Beliavsky–Tal (Moscow 1981), which continued 13...0–0 14. ♖e2 ♖a5 15. ♙b1 ♖ad8 16. c4 ♗xe5 17. dxe5 ♗d7 18. ♖d2 ♙g5 (with the aim of weakening the e5-pawn, but 18... b5!? 19. ♖hd1 ♗b6 came into consideration) 19. ♙xg5 h×g5 20. h6 (20. ♖hd1 ♗xe5!) 20...♗xe5.



Analysis diagram

21. ♖d5!!. This is now the last romantics played! The rook places itself under a four-fold attack, disrupting the coordination of Black's queen and knight. In the event of 21...c×d5? 22. ♖xe5 g×h6 23. ♖xh6 f6 24. ♖xe6+ ♖f7 25. ♗h5 Black cannot hold out. Tal preferred a prosaic solution: 21...♖xd5! 22. c×d5 ♖xd5 23. h×g7 ♗xg7 ½–½. Most of the spectators (and in the concert hall of the International Hotel there were more than a thousand) were puzzled by the peace agreement. This is not surprising, since a pretty variation remained off-stage: 24. ♗h5+! ♗g6! 25. ♗f4+! g×f4 26. ♖h5+ ♗f6 27. ♖h4+ ♗f5 28. ♖h5+ and Black has to reconcile himself to perpetual check, since 28...♗e4?! 29. ♖e2+ ♗d4 30. ♖d1+ ♗c5 31. ♖xd5+! ♗xd5 32. ♖d2+ is risky.

The position reached in this game after Black's 15th move occurred nearly a quarter of a century later in the game Bologan–Anand (Dortmund 2003), but White played 16. ♗g6! and after 16...♖fe8 17. ♗xe7+ ♖xe7 18. ♖d3 ♖ee8 19. ♖hd1 ♖d5 20. ♖g1! b5 21. ♖d2 a5?! (21...c5!) 22. ♗e2 b4 23. g4 his attack was more real.

But the pioneer of the 'impending' ♗e5–g6 (which is the idea of placing the knight on e5) was again Beliavsky, who carried it out in a game with Bent Larsen (Tilburg 1981). Black refrained from castling in favour of 13...a5 14. ♖he1 a4?, after which he ran into 15. ♗g6!. Nowadays this is one of the technical devices in the solving of such positions, which Carlsen used in the present game. There followed 15...♗d5?! (15...a3! 16. b3 ♗d5 was correct, although here too 17. ♗f5! secures White an advantage) 16. ♗f5! ♙f8? (16...exf5 really was better) 17. ♙d6 ♖g8 18. c4 ♗b4 19. ♖h3! f×g6 20. ♖xe6+ ♗f7 21. h×g6+ ♗xe6 22. ♖e1+ ♗e5 23. ♙xe5 1–0.

13...♖a5

In the game Bologan–Dreev (Dagomys 2006) Black simplified the position: 13...♗xe4 14. ♖xe4 ♗f6 15. ♖e2 ♖d5 16. ♙b1 ♖e4 and obtained a roughly equal endgame.

14. ♙b1 0–0 15. ♗xf6+

15. g4 ♗xg4 16. ♗e5 ♗dxe5 17. dxe5 ♖ad8 18. ♖h3 with sharp play has also occurred.

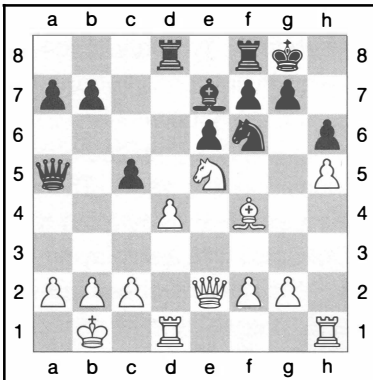
15...♗xf6 16. ♗e5 ♖ad8 17. ♖e2

The threat of ...c6–c5 could also have been parried by 17. ♖b3, but after 17...♖b6 18. ♖xb6 a×b6 a practically equal endgame is reached.



17...c5?!

Ernst proves to be unfamiliar with the variation, otherwise he would have played 17...♖b6! (Anand–Bareev, team match Russia v. Rest of the World, Moscow 2002), where the threat 18. ♘g6? is parried by 18...♙a3.



18. ♘g6! f×g6?

And this shows a lack of elementary knowledge (Bologan–Anand, Dortmund 2003). 18...♜fe8 19. ♘xe7+ ♜xe7 20. dxc5 ♜ed7! was essential, when it is not easy for White to demonstrate his superiority, since the c5-pawn is regained.

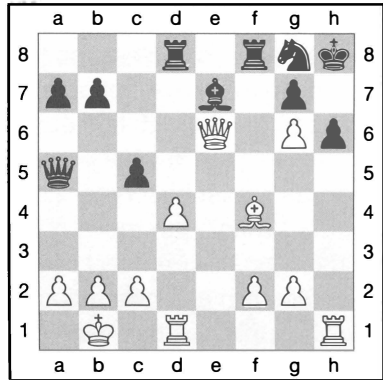
19. ♜xe6+ ♜h8 20. h×g6!

Creating a mating net, since Black has no defence against the sacrifice on h6,

destroying his king's protection.

20...♘g8

If 20...♜de8 or 20...♜d7 there is the decisive 21. ♜xh6+! g×h6 22. ♙xh6 followed by g6–g7. But the reinforcement of the h6-pawn does not change things.



21. ♙xh6! g×h6 22. ♜xh6+! ♘xh6 23. ♜xe7 ♘f7 24. g×f7 ♜g7 25. ♜d3 ♜d6

Mate could have been avoided by playing 25...♖b6 26. ♜g3+ ♖g6 27. ♜xg6+ ♜xg6, but all the same the endgame after 28. d5 is hopeless.

26. ♜g3+ ♜g6 27. ♜e5+ ♜xf7 28. ♜f5+ ♜f6 29. ♜d7 mate

A spectacular epaulette mate!

Inspired by his brilliant performance in Wijk aan Zee, Carlsen decided to test his powers in Moscow at a far higher level in the Aeroflot Open, which was then becoming increasingly strong. By that time in Russia the affectionate nickname Malyshev had become firmly attached to his name, by analogy with the popular hero of the children's stories *Karlson on the Roof* by the well-known Swedish author Astrid Lindgren. The attention of the experts in the press to the Norwegian prodigy was assured.

And so, the Rossiya Hotel, the A Tournament, where the consistently strong field did not afford any opportunities for a respite. Initially there was a set-back – in the first



round Magnus lost to Shulskis, after overlooking a simple tactic in time-trouble. But the youngster did not lose heart and he produced a series of three wins, gained in such dynamic style, that it became clear: he did not intend to yield to successors of the celebrated Soviet chess school.

‘I will never forget the veneration’, remembers the well-known chess journalist Evgeny Atarov, ‘with which Kasparov’s famous trainer Alexander Nikitin produced a copy of the Carlsen–Dolmatov score sheet: “This is the play of a genius!”’ Indeed, we don’t recall anyone defeating the experienced Sergey Dolmatov in 19 moves. The secret lay in Magnus’s thorough preparation for a specific opponent. His opening repertoire incorporated play with White, so to speak, from either hand – 1. e4 and 1. d4, but for Dolmatov he made an exception – 1. ♖f3!. And this is why. In his computer database he discovered 10 games with the reply 1...f5. It was here that the mine was laid – Magnus prepared a new plan in what was a seemingly harmless variation for Black.

There was a past history to the events which occurred in this game. The position arising after White’s 8th move occurred in the game Lerner–Bareev from the 1986 USSR Championship Premier League in Kiev, where Dolmatov was also playing. Evgeny Bareev recalled (in a conversation with Maxim Notkin, the notable chess commentator) that when this position was reached he became ill at ease, and, recognising the dangers facing Black, he managed to find a move order with which he did not lose (8...c6! 9. ♖d3 ♖xd3 10. ♖xd3 ♜f6 11. 0–0 ♖e7 12. ♜e2 d5). The confident defence found by Bareev, who did not allow the bishop to come out to c4, lulled the vigilance of Dutch players, who permitted themselves a seemingly insignificant transposition of moves, and this was noticed by Carlsen.

Game 4

M. Carlsen – S. Dolmatov

Moscow 2004

Réti Opening [A04]

1. ♜f3 f5 2. d3!?

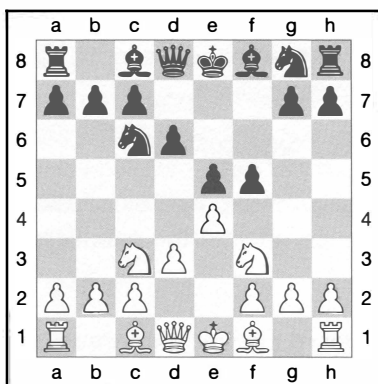
A kind of anti-Dutch variation, which mainly has a psychological effect.

2...d6 3. e4 e5 4. ♜c3

The position has acquired contours typical of the open games.

4...♜c6

Evgeny Bareev evaluates this position as favourable for White, and thinks that in this set-up Black should play 4...♜f6.



5. exf5! ♜xf5 6. d4 ♜xd4

Now if 6...e4 there is the unpleasant 7. d5!.

7. ♜xd4 exd4 8. ♖xd4 ♜f6?



The capture on c2 is dangerous for Black, who is clearly behind in development, but 8...c6 is stronger, hindering the development of the bishop at c4.

9. ♖c4!

Far more energetic than 9. ♖d3 ♖xd3 10. ♖xd3 c6 11.00 ♖e7 12. ♘e4 ♘xe4 13. ♖xe4 0-0 with equality, Romanishin–Malaniuk (Tallinn 1987).

9...c6 10. ♖g5!

The position is an open one, and, as is customary in such a situation, Carlsen develops his pieces in their most active positions.



10...b5

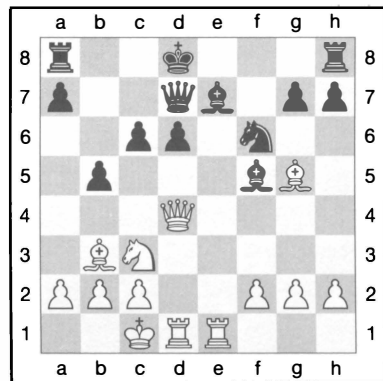
This move does not change the assessment of the position as dangerous for Black. If 10...d5 there follows 11. 0-0-0!, and it only remains to include the second rook in the play, after which the king will be doomed. Especially since the bishop on c4 is indirectly defended: 11...dxc4 12. ♖e5+ or 11...♖e7 12. ♖he1 0-0 (12...dxc4 13. ♖xf6) 13. ♖e5. The king can be moved off the dangerous file – 11...♔f7, although here too after 12. ♖he1 Black is lost. The variations 12...h6 13. ♘xd5!

cxd5 14. ♖xf6 gxf6 15. ♖f4 or 12...♖d6 13. ♖e5 ♖e6 14. ♖xf6 gxf6 15. ♖xe6! ♖xe6 16. ♘xd5 are convincing enough.

11. ♖b3 ♖e7?

The decisive mistake. Black's position was still hanging by a thread: 11...♖e7+! 12. ♔f1 (or 12. ♔d2 0-0-0) 12...0-0-0 13. a4 b4! 14. ♖xb4 d5, and at the cost of a pawn he would have avoided an immediate loss.

12. 0-0-0 ♖d7 13. ♖he1 ♔d8



This position recalls the times of the romantic 19th century. Similar positions can be found in the games of Paul Morphy and Adolf Anderssen. 'There follows a combination, as natural as the smile of a 13-year-old youth' (M. Notkin).

14. ♖xe7! ♖xe7 15. ♖f4 ♖d7 16. ♘e4 d5 17. ♘xf6 h6 18. ♖h4 g5 19. ♖d4

Black resigned. An impressive rout!

Game 5

M. Carlsen – E. Shaposhnikov

Moscow 2004

Nimzo-Indian Defence [E38]

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♘c3 ♖b4 4. ♖c2



This queen move, which has the aim of keeping the queenside pawn structure intact, is one of the most common reactions to the Nimzo-Indian Defence.

4...c5

Other popular replies are 4...0-0 and 4...d5.

5. dxc5 ♖xc5

5...♟a6 6. a3 ♖xc3+ 7. ♔xc3 ♟xc5 is also played, but most often Black replies 5...0-0 and captures on c5 with his bishop only after 6. a3.

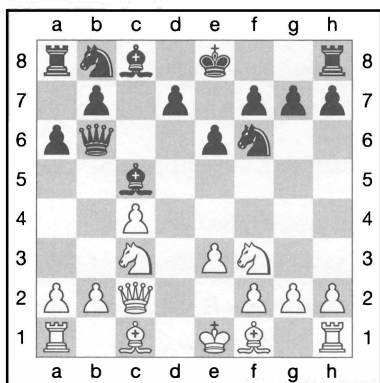
6. ♟f3

It is curious that in the event of 6. ♟f4 the play may unexpectedly transpose into a line of the classical Queen's Gambit: 6...0-0 7. ♟f3 ♟c6 8. e3 d5 9. ♖d1 ♔a5 10. a3 etc.

6...♔b6

Black provokes e2-e3, to prevent the development of the bishop at g5 or f4. However, as the further course of the game will show, it is just as well placed on the long diagonal.

7. e3 a6



Of course, Black's queen is obviously mis-

placed, and so he prepares to retreat it to the more appropriate square c7, by taking control of b5.

8. b3 ♔c7 9. ♟b2 b6 10. ♟e2 ♟b7 11. g4!?

As usual, Carlsen resolutely tries to exploit the opponent's slightly retarded development, especially as in the previous round he had gained a powerful charge of positive emotions. The alternative was the quiet 11. 0-0, but in this case Black can begin rather unpleasant (by human standards) 'Paulsen-like' counterplay with 11...♟g4! (there is also another, more solid reply – 11...♟e7!? with the intention of setting up a 'hedgehog' by ...d7-d6 and ...♟bd7). 11. ♖d1!?, recommended by Vitali Golod, deserves consideration.

11...♟xg4

The sacrifice has to be accepted, as otherwise White's play is too simple: g4-g5, ♟e4, 0-0-0, ♖dg1 and so on.

12. ♖g1 ♟xh2 13. ♟g5!

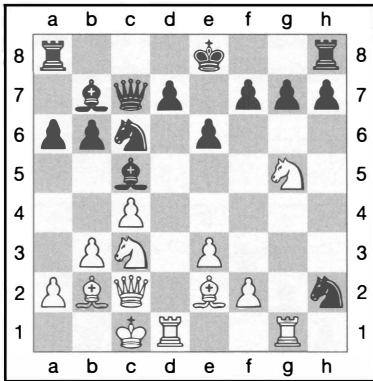
For what has White given up two pawns? All his pieces are in play, apart from the rook on a1, which needs only one move to be included. Black, on the other hand, has to solve the problems of both his uncastled king, and, no less important, the knight on h2 which is cut off from its main forces. The fearless Rybka assesses the position as equal, but in practice it is far more pleasant playing White.

13...♟c6! 14. 0-0-0

Things are unclear after the tempting 14. ♟xf7!? ♟xf7 15. ♖xg7+ ♟xg7 16. ♟d5+ ♔e5! – Black obtains too much material for the queen. For example, 17. ♟xe5+ ♟xe5



18. ♖b2 ♕d6 19. ♜xb6 ♕b4+ 20. ♔d1 ♜hf3 21. ♜xa8 ♝xa8 with chances for both sides.



14...♗e5?

This natural move, defending the f7-pawn and preparing queenside castling, is a mistake. In our computer age, concrete variations in chess increasingly take precedence over general considerations. Very many players (especially of the older generation) find it hard to accept this, especially since the variations are often such that they can hardly be found at the board when there is restricted time for thought.

Only 14...d5!! – a solution which at first sight looks like an attempt to extinguish a fire with petrol, and therefore without analysis will be rejected by 80% of players – enables Black to maintain a dynamic balance. Here are these variations, which conclude with the assessment ‘unclear’:

- a) 15. ♕h5 g6 16. ♜xd5 exd5 17. ♕xh8 gxh5 18. ♖xh7 0–0–0;
- b) 15. ♜xd5 exd5 16. ♕xg7 ♝g8 17. ♖xh7 0–0–0;
- c) 15. cxd5 ♜b4 16. ♖e4 0–0–0;
- d) 15. ♜a4 ♜b4! 16. ♖d2 0–0–0 17. ♜xc5 bxc5 18. ♕xg7 dxc4 19. ♕xh8 ♝xd2 20. ♝xd2 ♖a5.

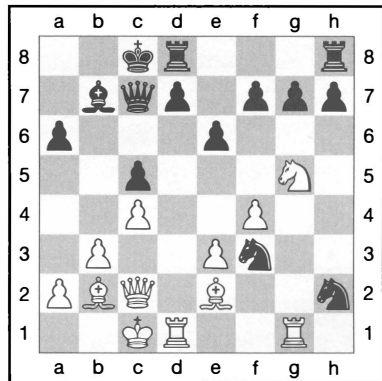
15. ♜ce4 0–0–0 16. ♜xc5 bxc5

16...♖xc5 is bad in view of 17. ♜e4! ♕xe4 (otherwise 18. ♜d6+) 18. ♖xe4, and the knight on h2 is lost.

17. f4

17. ♜e4! ♔b8 18. ♝xg7 was even better, with a very strong initiative. After the move in the game, strangely enough, White does not have a forced win.

17...♗ef3



18. ♜xf7?!

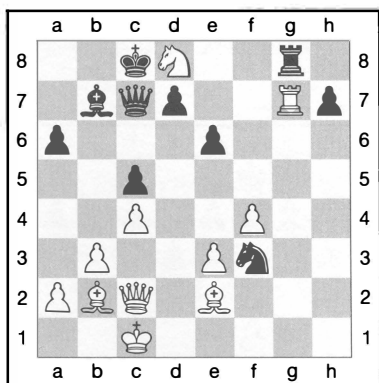
What could be more natural than this capture? However, the most obvious continuation again proves to be not the strongest. It was preferable to play 18. ♜xf3!? ♜xf3 19. ♝xg7 ♝df8 20. ♝f1! (the most accurate; there is no clear win after 20. ♝xh7 ♝hg8!, while if 20. ♝g3 Black is saved by 20...♜d4! 21. exd4? ♖xf4+) 20...♜h4 21. ♝g4 ♜f5 22. ♕xh8 ♝xh8 23. ♖c3. White succeeds in transforming his initiative into something more tangible, and he should gradually convert his exchange advantage.

18...♜xg1 19. ♝xg1 ♜f3 20. ♝xg7?!



The middlegame is of a purely calculating nature, and is not easy to annotate. The impetuous rook capture could have lost White the greater part of his advantage, which would have been retained by 20. ♖f1 ♗h4 21. ♗xh8 ♖xh8 22. ♙xg7 ♗e8 23. ♙h5 (or 23. ♖xh7). After 20. ♖g3 Black is again saved by 20...♗d4!

20...♖hg8 21. ♗xh8



21...♖xh8?

Black misses his chance: 21...♖xg7! 22. ♙xg7 ♖xh8, and if 23. ♖xh7 there is the unpleasant 23...♖a5!. Now White's position is again almost won.

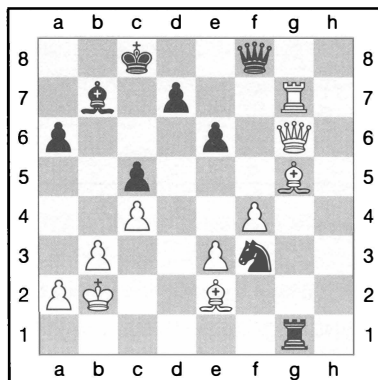
22. ♙f6! ♖f8 23. ♖xh7 ♖h8!

23...♖xg7 is hopeless: 24. ♙xg7 ♖f7 (if 24...♖e8 25. ♙c3, and the detached knight is soon won) 25. ♖h8+ ♗c7 26. ♙f6 ♙c6 27. ♖d8+ ♗b7 28. ♙xf3 ♙xf3 29. ♙e7! or 29. ♙e5.

24. ♖g6

White should have considered 24. ♖f7!? ♖xh7 25. ♖xf8+ ♗c7 26. ♖h8 ♖xh8 27. ♙xh8 ♙e4, when he has quite good chances of converting his extra pawn in the endgame.

24...♖h1+ 25. ♗b2 ♖g1 26. ♙g5



26...♖xg5?

Shaposhnikov apparently despairs of competing with his young opponent in the calculation of variations and he does not notice 26...♗h4! 27. ♖f6 (if 27. ♖h7, then 27...♙e4! 28. ♖f7 ♙xh7 29. ♖xf8+ ♗c7) 27...♖xf6+ 28. ♙xf6 ♖e1! 29. ♙g4 ♗g2 – thanks to his active rook Black still has saving chances.

27. ♙xg5 ♗e5 28. ♖f6 ♖d6 29. ♖g8+ ♗c7 30. ♗c3!

Black resigned.

Carlsen played the second half of the tournament with alternating success, but nevertheless, by scoring 5½ points in 9 rounds, for the second time in succession (after Wijk aan Zee) he achieved the grandmaster norm. He was developing literally before one's eyes, and a direct acquaintance with the Norwegian prodigy allowed certain observations to be made. In particular, pleasantly surprising was his modest behaviour and



the amazing composure with which Magnus conducted his games with experienced grandmasters. In his style of play one senses a classical approach to the game. He competently deploys his pieces, displaying his readiness to engage in a large-scale strategic battle. At the same time, his age often tells. Magnus is not averse to taking tactical decisions, and risky sacrifices of material occur for the sake of maintaining the initiative. Also, he constantly keeps the enemy king in view, and he displays exceptional imagination when attacking it. And all this is supported by wonderful calculating ability, not only with speed of thinking, but also depth of penetration into the position.

A surprising thing was Carlsen's striving for complete independence in his work on chess: 'I like to prepare on my own, and I don't understand how some outsider can impose on me his choice of opening or his vision of the fight.' A unique view for such a young age. At the same time he spoke with great respect about his first trainer Simen Agdestein, who responded in similar terms (Agdestein wrote about Magnus the book *Wonderboy*, published in 2004 by New in Chess).

After his successful performance in Moscow, Carlsen played less well at the traditional tournament in Reykjavik, where he scored only 50%. But the main result of the visit to Reykjavik was Carlsen's meeting with Garry Kasparov, who had been invited to take part in a blitz and rapid tournament. Garry easily beat Magnus at blitz, but in the rapid tournament, held on the knock-out system, an embarrassment almost occurred. In the first game, after playing the opening superficially, the strongest player in the world was thoroughly outplayed by the youngster, and it was only a lack of experience that prevented the latter from winning the game. In the second game Kasparov was extremely composed and he won the mini-match, but the impression remained and it had important consequences for Carlsen. When a year later Kasparov gave up top-level chess, he decided to share his experience with the one he considered the most worthy. His choice fell on the strongest young player from the West.

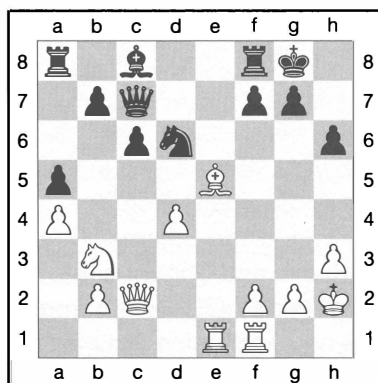
M. Carlsen – G. Kasparov

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. ♘f3 ♙f6 4. ♘c3 e6
5. ♙g5 ♘bd7 6. e3 ♜a5 7. ♘d2 ♙b4
8. ♜c2 0–0 9. ♙e2 e5 10. 0–0 exd4
11. ♘b3 ♜b6

11... ♜c7 was much better. Now somehow imperceptibly Garry slides into a positional mire.

12. exd4 dxc4 13. ♙xc4 a5 14. a4
♜c7 15. ♜ae1 h6 16. ♙h4 ♙d6 17. h3
♘b6 18. ♙xf6 ♘xc4 19. ♘e4 ♙h2+
20. ♙h1 ♘d6 (20...b5 21. ♘bc5 was

risky for Black) 21. ♙xh2 ♘xe4+
22. ♙e5 ♘d6



**23. ♖c5**

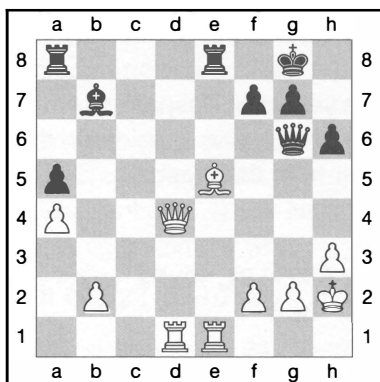
White acts as though in the Russian saying: 'You can't have too much of a good thing', but here it does not apply. Although Black's position is still unenviable – it is not easy for him to complete his development under fire by the opponent – Kasparov is given a respite.

The immediate 23. d5! would have set Garry serious problems.

23...♜d8 24. d5

It was also possible to transpose into a favourable endgame: 24. ♔xd6 ♖xd6+ 25. ♖xd6 ♜xd6 26. ♜e8+ ♔h7 27. ♜fe1 b5 28. ♜1e7 bxa4 29. ♔c5 ♜xd4 30. ♜xf7.

**24...♜d7 25. ♔d4 ♔f5 26. dxc6 bxc6
27. ♔xc6 ♜e8 28. ♜d1 ♖e6 29. ♜fe1
♜b7 30. ♔d4 ♔xd4 31. ♖xd4 ♖g6**

**32. ♖g4**

As it is fashionable to say nowadays, up to here Magnus has played like Fritz or Rybka. But the problem with computer programs is that they often evaluate endings with an extra pawn as though their 'brains' are switched off. They follow the principle: I have a pawn, so there is no need to think! And although, compared with other drawn positions, here there are opposite-colour bishops, not a single computer gives a drawn assessment.

Winning chances would have been retained by 32. f3, removing the threat from the bishop on b7, whereas White's dark-square bishop can attack both along the long diagonal, and – especially important – the a5-pawn.

**32...♜xg4 33. hxg4 ♜c6 34. b3 f6
35. ♜c3 ♜xe1 36. ♜xe1 ♜d5 37. ♜b1
♔f7 38. ♔g3 ♜b8 39. b4 axb4
40. ♜xb4 ♜c4 41. a5 ♜a6 42. f3 ♔g6
43. ♔f4 h5 44. gxh5+ ♔xh5 45. ♜h1+
♔g6 46. ♜c5 ♜b2 47. ♔g3 ♜a2
48. ♜b6 ♔f7 49. ♜c1 g5 50. ♜c7+ ♔g6
51. ♜c6 ♜f1 52. ♜f2**

Draw.

A month later, at the Open in Dubai, Magnus achieved the grandmaster norm for the third time (6½ points from 9 rounds), and then he confirmed his growing class in Scandinavia at the Sigeman Tournament (FIDE category 13). The tournament was held in Malmö and Copenhagen, but whereas in the Swedish part Magnus's play was rather restrained (2½ points from 5 rounds), in Denmark he defeated three grandmasters and finished in 3rd place with 5½ points out of 9, once again achieving the grandmaster norm.



The 13-year-old Norwegian's achievements were recognised by his inclusion in the World Championship in Libya, held on the knock-out system in May 2004. However, Carlsen's appearance went practically unnoticed, since in the very first round he lost to the rapidly progressing Levon Aronian. But it should be mentioned that the latter was able to overcome his young opponent only in the second rapid tie-break game, in which Magnus lost a theoretically drawn rook ending with f- and h-pawns.

After the set-back in Libya, Carlsen played without interruption, one tournament after another, and his rating also improved. By the time of the Olympiad in Calvia (Mallorca) the youngster had raised it by another hundred points and reached 2581, finally catching his more successful contemporary Sergey Karjakin. In the Norwegian team Magnus immediately made his debut on board 1, which was conceded to him by the permanent team leader, grandmaster Agdestein. Despite his higher rating, Magnus's trainer did not hesitate – the future belonged to him. And Carlsen did not let him down. He scored 3½ points from 5 games, and the Norwegian team finished in a respectable 31st place.

These successes marked an important watershed. The time of Swiss 'lotteries' was at an end. At the age of 14, with such a high rating, Magnus could hope for more favourable invitations from tournament organisers, and the opportunity presented itself to plan a schedule of performances. After the protracted series of official competitions, which had taken much strength, now was the time from him to rest and assess his capabilities. But signed contracts have to be fulfilled. And after the Olympiad came a considerable slump: an indifferent performance at the four-player Hoogeveen Essent Crown tournament in Holland and a complete failure in the Spanish Team Championship (four losses and five draws). Such a dismal finish could hardly have improved his mood before the New Year. But how could he reject taking part in a FIDE category 14 tournament in his homeland?

Game 6

M. Carlsen – E. Vladimirov

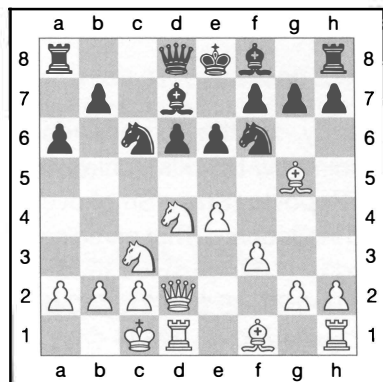
Dubai 2004

Sicilian Defence [B67]

1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 ♙c6 3. d4 cxd4
4. ♘xd4 ♘f6 5. ♙c3 d6 6. ♖g5 e6
7. ♚d2 a6 8. 0–0–0 ♙d7 9. f3

(see next diagram)

9...♞c8



Apart from the move in the game, Black has a wide choice of alternatives: 9...♙e7, 9...b5 or 9...♘xd4. For example, in the last case the following development of events is possible: 9...♘xd4 10. ♚xd4 ♙e7 11. g4 ♙c6 12. ♙e3 0–0 13. g5 ♘d7 14. h4 b5 15. ♙b1 b4 16. ♘e2 d5 17. exd5 ♙xd5 18. ♚f4 ♞c8 with good counter-



play for Black (Tal–Balashov, Tallinn 1973).

10. ♖e3

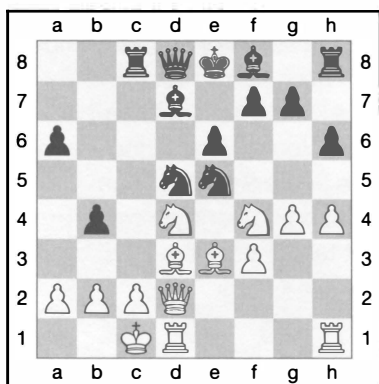
10. g4 is also possible: 10...♗e7 11. ♖e3 ♗e5 (11...h6 12. h4 transposes into the game) 12. g5 ♗h5 with double-edged play.

10...♗e5

Another development of events involves the exchange of knights: 10...♗xd4 11. ♖xd4 b5 12. g4 ♖c6 13. g5 ♗d7 with pawn attacks on opposite wings.

11. g4 h6 12. h4 b5 13. ♖d3 b4

14. ♗ce2 d5 15. exd5 ♗xd5 16. ♗f4



16...♗a5

Apparently, to the experienced Evgeny Vladimirov, Black's achievements in Gazik–Popovic (Stary Smokovec 1991) seemed inadequate. That game continued 16...♗xd3+ 17. ♗xd3 ♗xe3 18. ♗xe3 ♖c5 19. ♗h5 0–0 20. g5 ♗c7 21. ♗d2 (21. ♗f6+ gxf6 22. gxf6 ♗h7 23. ♗e4+ ♗h8 24. ♗e3 leads to a curious draw) 21...♖a4 22. gxh6 ♖xc2? (22...g6!? 23. ♗b1 ♗fd8 was correct) 23. hxg7 ♖g6 24. gxh8 ♗+ (24. ♗d1! ♖xd4 25. gxh8 ♗+ ♗xf8 26. ♗xd4 would have won material) 24...♖xf8+ 25. ♗c2

♖xc2 26. ♗f6+ ♗h8 27. ♗e8 ♗c6 28. ♗e5+ ♗g8 29. ♗d6?? (29. ♗f6+ ♗h8 30. ♗e8+ would have forced a draw) 29...♖h6+ 0–1.

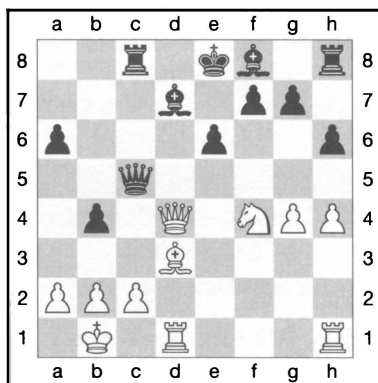
17. ♗b1 ♗xf3?!

How should this move be assessed? It looks very attractive, since the knight capture 18. ♗xf3? may lead to mate: 18...♗c3+! 19. bxc3 bxc3 20. ♗c1 ♖a3, but Black's illusions are soon dispelled. It would have been more logical to settle on 17...♗xd3 18. ♗xd3 ♗xe3 19. ♗xe3 ♖e7, with an inferior but defensible position.

18. ♗f2 ♗xe3 19. ♗xe3 ♗xd4

If 19...♖c5 there follows 20. ♗xf3 ♖xd4 21. ♗g6!, and the attempt to play for mate – 21...e5!? 22. ♗xh8 ♖e6 – is parried by 23. b3 ♗a3 24. ♖b5+ axb5 25. ♗xd4 exd4 26. ♗e1 ♗a7 27. ♗g6.

20. ♗xd4 ♗c5



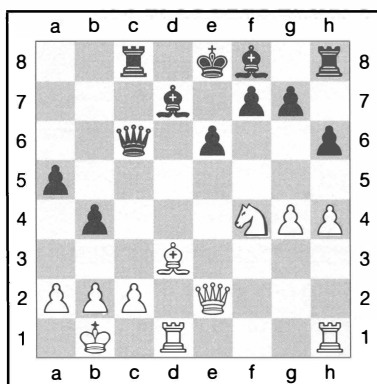
21. ♗e4

Black is behind in development and White builds up the threats (if 21...♖e7 there follows 22. ♗h5), completely ruling out the possibility of the black king castling. At first sight the queen move seems impossible due to 21...♖c6 22. ♗e2 ♖xh1, but it is



here that a 'mine' has been laid: 23. ♖×e6! ♖e7 (23...f×e6 24. ♖×e6+ leads to mate: 24...♙d8 25. ♙e4+ 24. ♙f5!! and there is no defence against the mate by 25. ♖d8+ ♖×d8 26. ♖c7#. A pretty mate also awaits Black after 21...♙e7 22. ♖h5 ♙c6 23. ♖×g7+ ♙f8 24. ♖×e6+ f×e6 25. ♖hf1+ ♙e8 26. ♖×c6+ ♖×c6 27. ♙g6#!

21...♖c6 22. ♖e2 a5

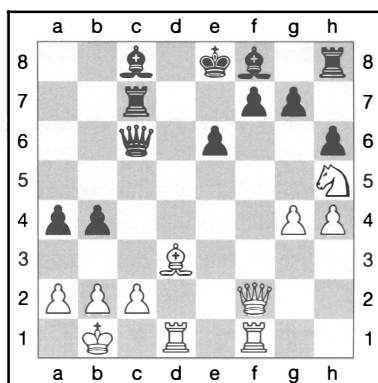


Black has an extra pawn and the two bishops: what else, it would seem, can he want? But the main thing is the insecure position of his king. If 22...♙d6 there follows 23. ♖h5 0–0 24. g5 with a dangerous attack.

23. ♖h5 a4 24. ♖hf1! ♖c7

Black is obliged to forget about counterplay: 24...b3 25. c×b3 a×b3 26. ♖f2 b×a2+ 27. ♙a1 and he has to run with his king – 27...♙d8 (27...f6? 28. ♖×f6+!), allowing 28. ♖×f7. Therefore he defends the f7-pawn with his rook, but White strikes a blow at its neighbour. In the event of the defence by the queen 24...♖c5 25. ♖f3 ♖e7 there follows a blow from the left – 26. ♖b7.

25. ♖f2 ♙c8



26. ♖d4!

The double attack (27. ♙b5 with mate at d8 is threatened, as well as the capture on g7) is irresistible.

26...♖d7 27. ♖×g7+ ♙×g7 28. ♖×g7 ♖f8 29. ♖×h6

White is now a pawn up with a continuing attack on the king. The game is decided.

29...b3

If 29...a3, then 30. ♖g5 with the threat of 31. ♙b5 is decisive, since after 30...♙a6 31. ♙×a6 ♖×a6 there follows 32. ♖f4, as occurred in the game.

30. a×b3 a×b3 31. c×b3 ♙a6 32. ♙×a6 ♖×a6 33. ♖f4! ♖a7

If 33...♖b5, then 34. ♖c4 is an adequate reply.

34. ♖b8+ ♙e7 35. ♖b4+

Black resigned.

Game 7

D. Palo – M. Carlsen

Gausdal 2004

Nimzo-Indian Defence [E32]

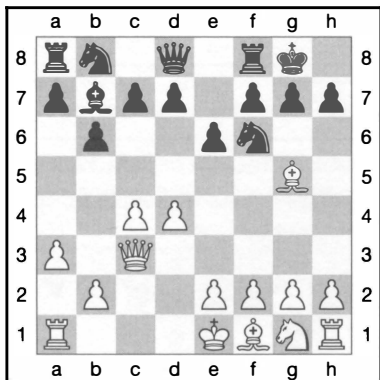


1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♙c3 ♖b4 4. ♚c2
0-0 5. a3 ♗xc3+ 6. ♚xc3 b6 7. ♗g5

12...cxd4 13. ♚xd4 ♙c5 14. ♗c2 e5
15. ♚f2

Another plan involves the development of the bishop at b2: 7. ♙f3 ♗b7 8. e3 d6 9. ♗e2 ♙bd7 10. 0-0 ♙e4 11. ♚c2 f5 12. b4 etc.

7...♗b7



8. ♙f3

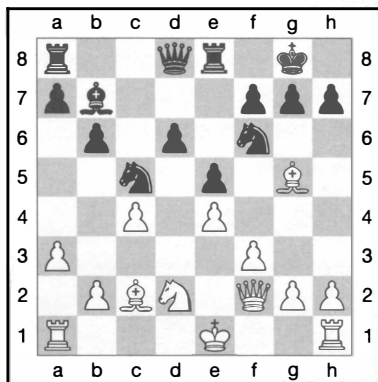
At the present time fashion gives preference to 8. e3 d6 9. ♙e2 ♙bd7 10. ♚c2. For example: 10...h6 11. ♗h4 c5 12. ♗d1 ♚c7 13. ♙c3 a6 14. ♚d2 ♗ad8 15. f3 d5 16. cxd5 exd5 17. ♗d3 ♗fe8 18. 0-0 ♚c6 19. ♗c2, and one can speak of some advantage for White (Dreev – Korotylev, Moscow 2009).

8...d6 9. ♙d2

The simple 9. e3 ♙bd7 10. ♗d3! is also possible, since the exchange on f3 can only favour White, who gains the advantage of the two bishops against two knights and the half-open g-file for an attack. 10. ♗e2 ♗c8 11. 0-0?! is less good because of 11...♙e4!.

9...♙bd7 10. f3 c5 11. e4 ♗e8 12. ♗d3

12. ♗e2 deserves consideration.



15...♗g4!

This tactical trick enables Black to solve his opening problems. 15...♙fxe4? did not work because of 16. ♙xe4 ♙xe4 17. ♗xe4.

16. ♗xd8?!

16. ♚h4! f6! 17. ♚xg4 fxg5 18. 0-0-0 was stronger, with an unclear game. The Danish player probably underestimated the dangers awaiting him in the endgame, which is by no means so harmless for White as it may seem.

16...♙xf2 17. ♗xf2 ♗exd8

A close examination of the position reveals that the weak d6-pawn is easily defended, and the possession of the d5-point does not play any great role. At the same time, White's light-square bishop is bad, and the dark squares in his position are weakened.

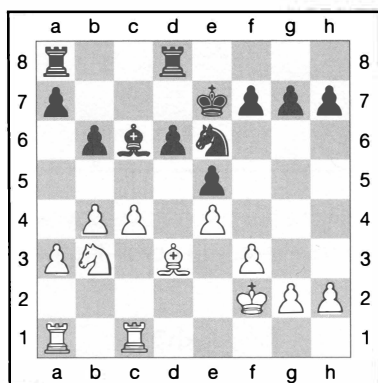
18. b4

In the event of 18. ♗hd1 ♙e6 the black knight would have reached d4, which, however, would hardly be fatal for White.



The move in the game is more active, but also more committing – the c4-pawn is weakened.

**18... ♖e6 19. ♖hc1 ♜f8 20. ♜b3 ♜e7
21. ♙d3 ♙c6**



22. a4?

This merely aggravates White's difficulties. The accurate 22. ♜d2 was better.

22... a5! 23. bxa5 ♜c5!

Apparently Palo was only reckoning on 23...bxa5 24. c5!, when the position becomes equal. Now another white pawn is fixed on a light square.

24. ♙c2

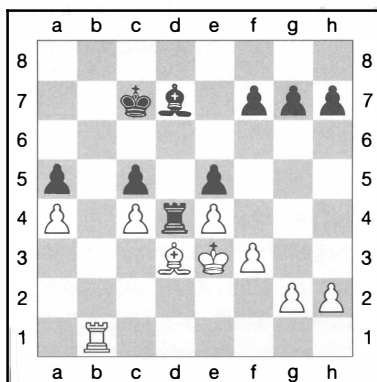
After 24. ♜xc5 both captures would have led to a big advantage for Black.

**24... bxa5 25. ♖cb1 ♜d7 26. ♜xc5+
dxc5**

The position can be assessed as 'between a win for Black and a draw'. It is important only for Black to retain at least one pair of rooks, to avoid the creation of a fortress. In practice the stronger side is often successful in such cases, since it is very difficult to defend passively.

**27. ♖d1+ ♜c7 28. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 29. ♜e3
♖d4 30. ♙d3 ♙d7 31. ♖b1**

If 31. ♖a2!? Carlsen would probably have played 31...g6 32. ♖b2 f5. The difference compared with the game continuation was that the 6th rank would remain closed, and Black would be denied the possibility of ...♖d6–g6–h6, which could have given White additional chances.



31... f5! 32. ♖c1

It was not possible to capture on f5 because of 32. exf5 ♖xd3+! 33. ♜xd3 ♙xf5+, but 32. g3 g5 (32...♖d6 33. ♙c2) 33. ♖g1 was interesting.

32... f4+ 33. ♜e2 ♖d6 34. ♖b1 ♖h6!

It is useful to provoke h2–h3, after which White's pawns are on squares of the colour of his bishop.

35. h3 ♖g6!

Carlsen demonstrates excellent technique – it is also not out of place to draw the king away from the centre.

**36. ♜f2 ♖d6 37. ♜e2 g5 38. ♙c2 h5
39. ♖d1 ♖d4**

It would have been a blunder to play



39...♖xd1? 40. ♜xd1 g4 41. h4, when there is nowhere for Black to break through.

40. ♜d3

40. ♖xd4 cxd4 followed by the king march to c5 was also hopeless.

40...♖d6 41. ♜c2 ♖d4 42. ♜d3 ♜c6

The opening of a second front comes into Black's plans, but for the moment 42...g4 is premature because of 43. h×g4 h×g4 44. ♖h1 with the activation of the rook (44...♜xa4 45. ♖a1).

43. ♖g1 ♖d8 44. g3!?

If 44. ♖b1, then 44...♜xa4! (44...♖h8 is less good: 45. ♜c2 g4 46. h4! and White has excellent chances of setting up a fortress) 45. ♖a1 ♜c6 46. ♖xa5 ♜b6! (but not 46...♖a8 47. ♖xa8 (47. ♖xc5 ♜d6) 47...♜xa8 48. ♜d2 ♜b6 49. ♜c3 ♜a5 50. ♜b3=) 47. ♖a1 ♖a8. The point of Black's plan is to break through with his king via the queenside: 48. ♖xa8 (after 48. ♖b1+ ♜c7 White is probably lost) 48...♜xa8 49. ♜d2 ♜a5 50. ♜c3 ♜a4 51. ♜c2+ ♜a3 52. ♜b1 ♜c6 53. ♜c2 ♜a4 54. ♜d3 ♜a2! and wins.

44...♖g8 45. g×f4 exf4 46. e5!

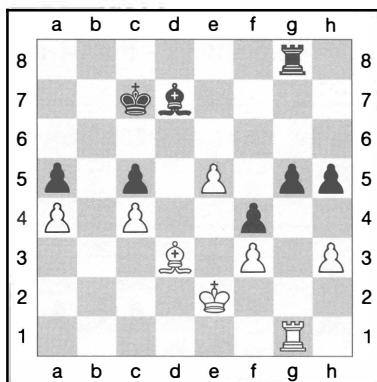
White deprives himself of his only trump – the protected passed pawn, but this decision is forced, since Black was threatening ...♜d6–e5 with a total bind.

46...♜d7

(see next diagram)

47. ♜h7?!

47. ♜e4! was more resilient: 47...♜xh3 48. ♜d5 ♖g7 49. ♖b1 ♖e7! 50. ♖b7+ ♜d8 51. ♖b8+ ♜c8 52. ♖a8 ♖xe5+ 53. ♜f2



and, despite his two extra pawns, Black still has to overcome some technical difficulties.

47...♖g7 48. ♜e4 ♜xh3

As usually happens when converting an advantage, at the critical moment one has to switch from the systematic strengthening of the position to the calculation of specific variations.

49. ♖h1 g4 50. ♖b1 ♖g5 51. ♖b7+ ♜d8 52. e6 ♖e5

The e-pawn has been stopped, and White is unable to cope with the connected passed pawns.

53. ♖f7 g3 54. ♖xf4 ♖g5 55. ♜d5 ♜xe6! 56. ♜f1 ♜xd5 57. cxd5 ♖xd5 58. ♜g2 ♖d4 59. ♖f5 h4 60. ♜h3 c4

White resigned.

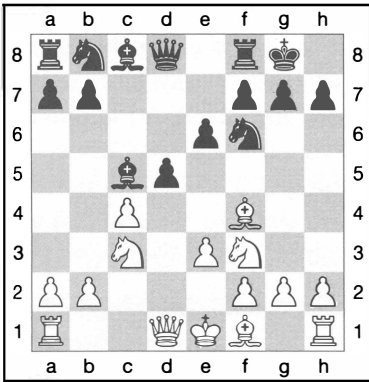
Game 8

M. Carlsen – N. Short

Hoogeveen 2004

Queen's Gambit [D37]

1. d4 ♠f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♠f3 d5 4. ♠c3 ♜e7 5. ♜f4 0–0 6. e3 c5 7. dxc5 ♜xc5



8. cxd5

A few years later, when he had grown up a little, at the 2008 Bilbao tournament Carlsen chose a more aggressive variation against Ivanchuk: 8. ♖c2 ♗c6 9. a3 ♜a5 10. 0–0–0 ♗e7 11. h4 ♗d8 12. ♗d2 a6!? 13. ♗e2 b5! 14. cxd5 exd5 15. g4?!

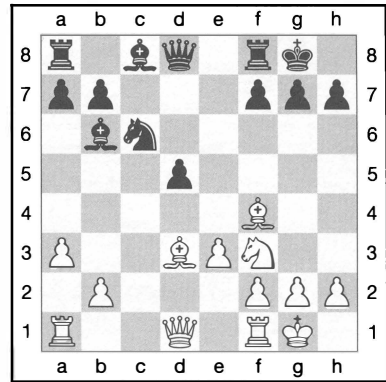
This attack is too late, and White should have restricted himself to central strategy: 15. ♗b3 ♜b6 16. ♗d4 ♗xd4 17. ♗xd4, restraining Black's initiative. If 17...♗c5 there can follow 18. ♗e5 ♗xd4 19. ♗xd4 when the centralised bishop, which has no opponent, is no weaker than a rook.

The game continued 15...♗e6 16. ♗b3 ♜b6 17. g5 ♗e4 18. ♗xe4 dxe4 19. ♗xd8+ ♗xd8!? (19...♜xd8 20. ♗b1 ♜d5 21. ♗c1 ♗c8 22. ♜d1 ♜c5 23. ♗b3 ♜f5 is also possible, retaining a dangerous initiative) 20. ♗b1 ♗c8 21. ♜d1 ♗c6 22. h5 a5! and Black's attack proved more real.

8...♗xd5 9. ♗xd5 exd5 10. a3

Sharper play results from 10. ♗d3 ♗b4+ 11. ♗e2 ♗c6 12. ♜c2 h6 13. ♗hd1 with strong pressure in the centre, although White's unsheltered king nevertheless gives him some problems.

10...♗c6 11. ♗d3 ♗b6 12. 0–0



12...d4

Magnus has also had occasion to play this position with Black. At the Amber Tournament (Nice 2009) in his blindfold game with Ivanchuk he set White more complicated problems: 12...♗g4 13. h3 ♗h5 14. b4 ♗e8 15. ♗c1 a6 16. ♗xa6 ♗xa6 17. b5 ♗xa3 18. bxc6 bxc6 19. ♗xc6 ♗a7 and White could find nothing better than to go into a position with opposite-colour bishops – 20. ♜b3 ♗xf3 21. ♗xb6 ♗e2 22. ♗b1 ♗c4. The game is level.

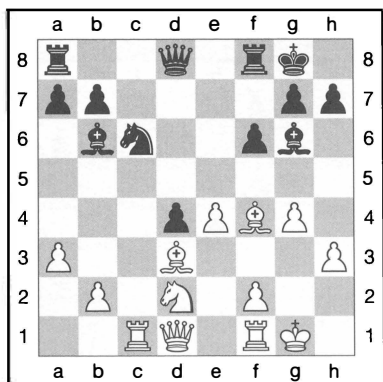
13. e4 ♗g4 14. h3 ♗h5 15. g4 ♗g6 16. ♗d2 f6

If 16...♗e8, then 17. ♗g3 followed by f2–f4 is possible.

17. ♗c1

(see next diagram)

In this variation 17. ♗c4 ♗c7 18. ♗xc7 ♜xc7 19. f4 is more often played. The game Pelletier–Ubilava (Spain 2000) continued: 19...♗f7! 20. ♗c1 ♗h8 21. b4 ♗xc4 22. ♗xc4, and here instead of 22...♜d6 Black could have played 22...♜b6! with strong counterplay in connection with ... a7–a5 (Dautov).

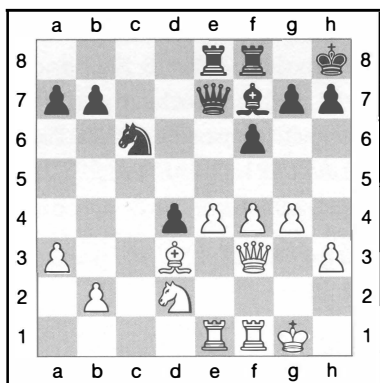


**17...♗h8 18. ♖c4 ♕c7 19. ♔xc7 ♜xc7
20. f4 ♝ae8**

20...♕f7! was stronger.

21. ♜f3 ♜e7 22. ♝ce1 ♕f7 23. ♜d2!

A subtle move, making way for the bishop.



23...g5!

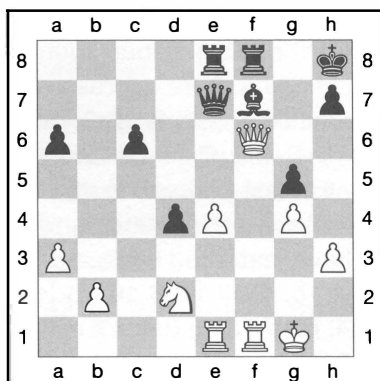
Sensible prophylaxis. Black sets up a barrier on the distant approaches to his king. With passive play the pawn offensive could have become very dangerous: 23...a6 24. h4! h6 25. g5! f×g5? 26. h×g5 h×g5 27. ♜h3+ ♔g8 28. e5 g6 29. e6! and White wins the bishop (29...♕xe6 30. ♝xe6).

24. ♕b5 a6?

In view of the weakening of the kingside, it was essential to cover the f6-square – 24...♕g6!, preventing White's manoeuvre which he carried out in the game. Then 25. ♕xc6 b×c6 is pointless, since the pawn breakthrough 26. f5 ♕f7 27. e5? ♕d5 is to Black's advantage. He also has a sound position after 25. ♜g3 ♜c5 or 25. ♜d3 ♕d8.

25. ♕xc6 b×c6 26. f×g5 f×g5 27. ♜f6+!

At that time Carlsen was already noted for his practical approach. If he sees real chances in an endgame, he is prepared to be satisfied with a small advantage.



27...♔g8?

Short was clearly rattled. Otherwise how can it be explained that he gave up the d4-pawn, and then 'asked' to go into an endgame. After 27...♜xf6 28. ♝xf6 c5 29. e5! (29. ♝ef1 ♔g7 30. ♝xa6 ♝b8 31. ♝a7 ♔g8 32. e5! ♝xb2 33. ♜e4 ♕g6 is not so clear) 29...♝e7 (with the idea of 30. ♝xa6 ♝fe8, since otherwise White will pick up the a6-pawn for free) 30. ♜f3 ♝fe8 31. ♕d6! a5 32. ♝c1 White fixes all the opponent's weaknesses.

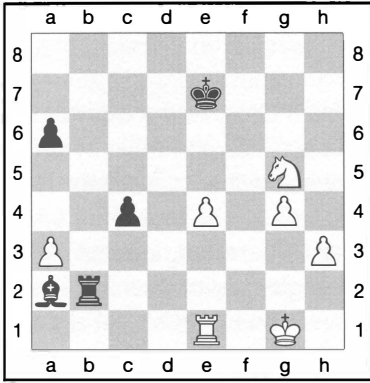
28. ♜xd4 c5 29. ♜f6 ♜xf6 30. ♝xf6

White is a pawn up with the better posi-



tion. Magnus conducts the technical phase impeccably.

30...♖b8 31. ♘f3 ♖xb2 32. ♘xg5 ♗a2
33. ♖xf8+ ♜xf8 34. ♘xh7+ ♜e7 35. ♘g5 c4



Black's last hope is his passed pawn. But Magnus is vigilant.

36. ♖c1 ♖b3 37. ♜f2 c3

The pawn capture 37...♖xa3 38. ♖a1 c3
39. ♜e3 leads to a mortal pin.

**38. e5 ♖xa3 39. ♘e4 c2 40. ♖xc2 ♖xh3
41. ♖c7+ ♜d8 42. ♖a7 ♗c4 43. g5 ♖h4
44. ♘d6 ♗e6 45. g6**

Here the curtain could have been lowered.

**45...♖g4 46. g7 a5 47. ♜f3 ♖g1
48. ♘b7+ ♜e8 49. ♘c5 ♗f7 50. ♘e4
♖xg7 51. ♘d6+ ♜f8 52. ♖a8+ ♜e7
53. ♘f5+ ♜d7 54. ♖a7+**

Black resigned.

Chapter 2

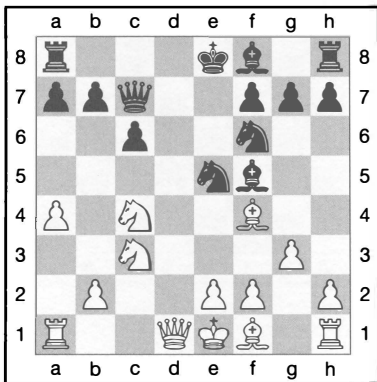
The Way to the Top

The chess festival in the town of Drammen, not far from Oslo, was a notable event in Norway. Just think, 500 players, divided into 10 tournaments, the main of which was the Drammen Smartfish Masters (FIDE category 14), were invited to greet the New Year 2005 in a friendly atmosphere. How could their idol refuse such an invitation? Of course, Magnus played, but somehow superficially. In the very first round, against the Danish grandmaster Peter Heine Nielsen, well-known for his high-quality opening knowledge (he had worked with none other than Anand), he played, so to speak, 'at sight'.

P. H. Nielsen – M. Carlsen

Drammen 2004/2005

1. $\text{d}1\text{f}3$ $\text{d}1\text{f}6$ 2. $\text{c}4$ $\text{c}6$ 3. $\text{d}4$ $\text{d}5$ 4. $\text{d}1\text{c}3$
 $\text{d} \times \text{c}4$ 5. $\text{a}4$ $\text{e}5$ 6. $\text{d}1\text{e}5$ $\text{d}1\text{bd}7$ 7. $\text{d}1 \times \text{c}4$
 $\text{c}7$ 8. $\text{g}3$ $\text{e}5$ 9. $\text{d} \times \text{e}5$ $\text{d}1 \times \text{e}5$ 10. $\text{e}4$



In this *tabiya* of the Slav Defence, where since the 1930s 10... $\text{d}8$ 11. $\text{b}3$ $\text{d}1\text{f}7$ has been played, Magnus surprised the opening encyclopaedist with an eccentric idea, which shortly before he had seen in an Internet game of Alexander Morozevich. Black is ready to sacrifice a knight with the aim of keeping the white king in the centre.

10... $\text{d}1\text{fg}4$?! 11. $\text{f}3$ $\text{g}5$!

But this is already his own home preparation, since Morozevich's continuation 11... $\text{e}7$ 12. $\text{fxg}4$ $\text{d}3+$ 13. $\text{c} \times \text{d}3$ $\text{e} \times \text{d}3$ 14. $\text{d}6+$ $\text{c} \times \text{d}7$ 15. 0–0–0 led to serious problems. However, the attempt to rehabilitate the idea of the piece sacrifice proves unsound.

12. $\text{fxg}4$ $\text{g} \times \text{f}4$ 13. $\text{d}1 \times \text{e}5$ $\text{c} \times \text{e}5$ 14. $\text{g} \times \text{f}5$
 $\text{e} \times \text{c}5$ 15. $\text{c}2$

By playing 15. $\text{c}3$! Nielsen could have placed Black in a critical position. Now, however, he gains definite counterplay.

15...0–0–0 16. $\text{e}4$ $\text{fxg}3$ 17. $\text{g}2$ $\text{d}6$
18. $\text{d}3$ $\text{c} \times \text{f}4$?

18... $\text{c} \times \text{f}6$ was correct.

19. $\text{c} \times \text{g}3$ $\text{d}2+$ 20. $\text{c} \times \text{f}1$ $\text{c} \times \text{b}2$ 21. $\text{b}1$
 $\text{c} \times \text{b}1+$ 22. $\text{d}1 \times \text{b}1$ $\text{d}1+$ 23. $\text{e}1$ $\text{e} \times \text{hd}8$
24. $\text{e}4$, and White converted his extra piece.



However, every cloud has a silver lining! Nielsen began taking a closer look at Magnus (they had already played six months earlier in the Sigeman tournament) and he soon became his mentor. Talking about Nielsen, it should be mentioned that the Dane had absorbed many of the methods of the Soviet chess school. It was no accident that Garry Kasparov named him as one of the trainers who would help in the development of Carlsen's opening repertoire.

As regards Magnus's further play in the Drammen tournament, the casual start did not bring any benefit. In the 3rd round he was 'punished' for his superficial play in the opening by the 73-year-old veteran Victor Korchnoi. Then came opening disasters against Johannessen and Macieja, which demonstrated the inadequacy of his 'black' repertoire. The result was a share of last place with the lady world champion Antoaneta Stefanova. Some consolation was provided by his only win, over Alexey Shirov. True, this was not without the help of the elite grandmaster, who failed to withstand Magnus's 'cavalier' attack. This win allowed Peter Heine Nielsen to catch Shirov and share 1st–2nd places with him. The two Scandinavians then travelled together to the tournament in Wijk aan Zee.

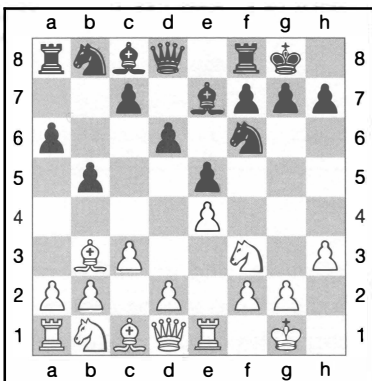
Game 9

M. Carlsen – A. Shirov

Drammen 2004/2005

Ruy Lopez [C95]

1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♜c6 3. ♙b5 a6 4. ♙a4
 ♜f6 5. 0–0 ♙e7 6. ♞e1 b5 7. ♙b3 0–0
 8. c3 d6 9. h3 ♜b8



The ultra-solid Breyer Variation.

10. d4 ♜bd7 11. ♜bd2 ♙b7 12. ♙c2
 ♞e8 13. ♜f1 ♙f8 14. ♜g3 g6 15. b3 c6

Black prevents the d4–d5 advance, which is possible after the automatic fianchetto of the bishop – 15...♙g7 16. d5 ♜e7 17. c4, when White gains a spatial advantage.

16. ♙g5 ♙g7

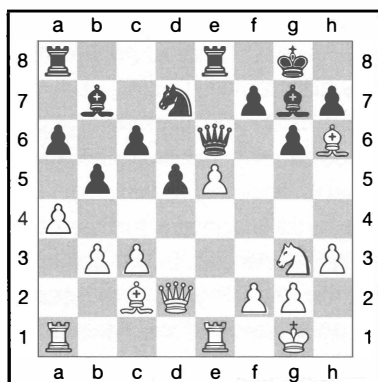
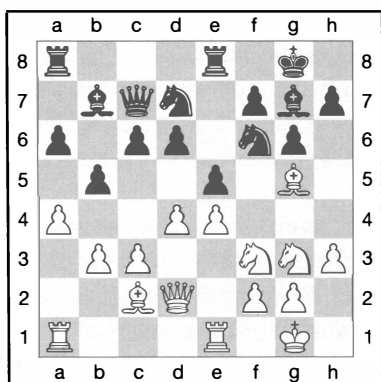
The preparatory 16...h6 came into consideration, to drive the bishop from its active position.

17. ♜d2 ♜c7

The traditional 'Spanish' post for the queen, but in recent years Black has also played 17...♜e7, a keen advocate of which is Krishnan Sasikiran. For example, one of his recent games, against Bauer in the 2008 French Team Championship, continued 18. a4 ♜f8 19. ♙d3 d5!? 20. dxe5 ♜xe5 21. ♜xe5 ♞xe5 22. ♙f4 ♞ee8 23. e5 ♜d7 with double-edged play.

18. a4

(see next diagram)



18...d5

This leads to the opening of the position, which allows White, thanks to the active placing of his pieces, to develop an attack on the kingside. 18...♖ad8 followed by ...♗f8 or the immediate 18...♗f8 was more solid, after which Carlsen was intending 19. b4 and then ♖b3, training his bishop on f7.

19. dxe5 ♗xe5

After the complete opening of the centre – 19...♗xe5 20. ♖xe4 dxe4 21. ♗xe4 ♗xe5 22. ♗xe5 ♖xe5 – Black has to reckon with 23. ♗f6+ ♖xf6 24. ♖xf6, when it is not easy for him to defend on the kingside.

20. ♗xe5 ♖xe5 21. ♖f4

In the event of 21. f4 ♖c7 22. e5 ♗d7 the bishop at g5 proves to be out of play.

21...♖e6 22. e5 ♗d7 23. ♖h6

(see next diagram)

23...♖h8

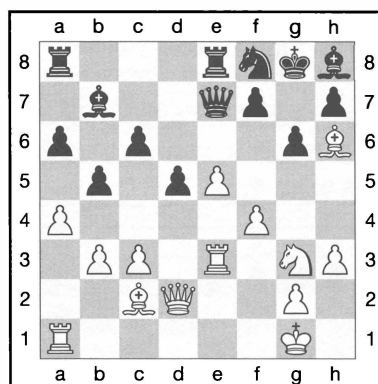
The attempt to win a pawn – 23...bxa4 (23...♗xe5? 24. ♖xg7 ♗xg7 25. f4 loses the knight) 24. bxa4 ♗xe5 25. ♖xg7 ♗xg7 is parried by the interposition 26. ♖ab1! ♖ab8,

and by exploiting the pin, White wins a piece: 27. f4 ♗c4 28. ♖xe6 ♗xd2 29. ♖xe8 ♖xe8 30. ♖xb7.

24. f4 ♖e7 25. ♖e3

With the threat of 26. ♗f5 gxf5 27. ♖g3+.

25...♗f8



26. ♖f1?!

A natural move, and an indication of the deficiencies in the young grandmaster's 'schooling'. The attack should be combined with prophylaxis against possible counterplay by the opponent. It was correct first to restrict Black's play on the queenside by 26. b4!? with the possible continuation 26...c5 27. ♖ae1 bxa4?! 28. ♖xa4



♖ec8 29. ♗g5!? (this is stronger than 29. f5 cxb4 30. cxb4 ♖c4) 29...♗e6 30. bxc5. But for the moment doubts are something unfamiliar to Magnus, and he launches an attack on the king, indicating his readiness to sacrifice a whole rook.

26...c5 27. f5?!

This direct attack is parried by counterplay in the centre, a fact admitted by Carlsen himself, who considers the correct move to be the prophylactic 27. ♖f1!?

27...d4

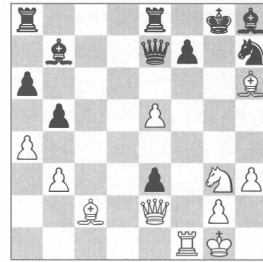
Without the slightest doubts! The e5-pawn is 'poisoned' because of the pin on the bishop – 27...♗xe5?! 28. ♗xf8 ♖c7 (28...♖xf8? loses to the interposition 29. f6, casting a mating net around the king: 29...♗d6 30. ♖xe5 ♗xe5 31. ♗h6). But now White forces the transition into a clearly favourable endgame: 29. ♖xe5 ♗xe5 30. ♗h6 ♗e3+ 31. ♔h2 ♗xh6 32. ♗xh6 (variation by Carlsen).

28. cxd4 cxd4 29. fxg6?!

A continuation of the previously calculated line. It was not yet too late to 'call a halt' – 29. ♗xd4 ♗xe5.

29...hxg6?!

The energetic actions of his young opponent so impressed the experienced fighter Shirov, who himself had gained numerous wins with a direct attack on the king, that he flinched and could not bring himself to go in for the critical continuation 29...dxe3! 30. gxh7+ ♔xh7 31. ♗e2.



Analysis diagram

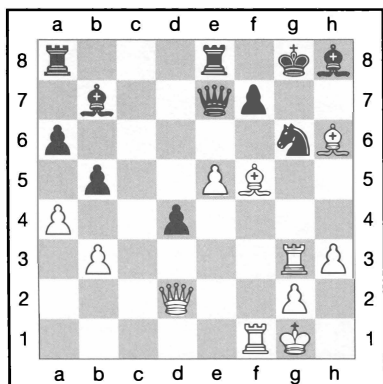
However, the threat of 32. ♗g4+ can be parried, and White does not have compensation for the sacrificed rook, since he has to reckon with the advance of the e3-pawn. Carlsen gives the following variations:

- a) 31...♗xe5 32. ♗g4+ ♗g7 (the pin allows White to regain one of the pieces) 33. ♗xh7+ ♔h8 (if 33...♔xh7? there is 34. ♖xf7, when 34...♔xh6? fails to 35. ♔f5+), and White's attack suffices only to save the game: 34. ♔f5 ♗xh6 35. ♔xh6 ♖e7 (or 35...♗d5 36. ♗h4 ♗g7 37. ♔xf7+ ♗xf7 38. ♗g6+ ♔g8 39. ♗xf7+ ♗xf7 40. ♖xf7 ♔xf7 41. ♗f4+, forcing a draw by perpetual check) 36. ♗h4 e2 37. ♔xf7+ ♖xf7 38. ♗g6+ ♔g8 39. ♗xf7+ ♔f8 40. ♗h6+ ♔e7 41. ♗h4+ ♔f8 42. ♗h6+ with perpetual check;
- b) 31...♗xe5!? (vacating a square for the king) 32. ♗xh7+ (32. ♗g4+ ♔h8 33. ♔f5 ♖g8) 32...♔xh7 33. ♗h5 e2 34. ♔xe2 ♔g8 and White's attack comes to a standstill.

30. ♔f5?

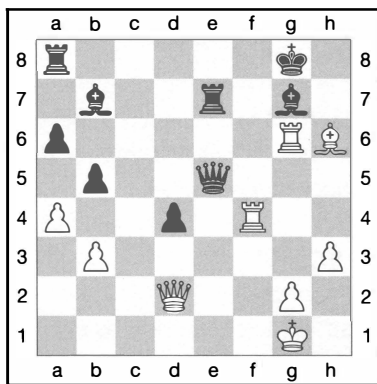
Carlsen cannot stop himself, but this reckless knight sacrifice should have led to defeat. Therefore he should have retreated his rook – 30. ♖e2 (weaker is 30. ♗xd4 ♗xe5), intending after 30...♗xe5 the exchanging operation 31. ♗xf8 ♗xf8 32. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 33. ♗xg6 ♗d5 34. ♔h5.

30...gxh5 31. ♖g3+ ♔g6 32. ♗xf5

**32...♙xe5?!**

After 32...♙xe5! 33. ♖g4 ♗d6 34. ♗d3 ♙c8! 35. ♖xg6+ f×g6 36. ♙xg6 ♙d7 White's hopes would have been dashed. But even after the text move it is not easy for him to save the game.

33. ♖g4 ♙g7 34. ♙xg6 f×g6 35. ♖xg6 ♙e7 36. ♖f4

**36...♙e4??**

In the time scramble Shirov overlooks an interposition, leading to his defeat. The bishop manoeuvre was good only after the inclusion of 36...♖f8, which would have forced the exchange on g7, since if 37. ♖xd4 ♙e4! 38. ♖g5 Black has 38...♖f5.

37. ♖g5! ♗e6 38. ♙xg7

Black resigned.

In 2005 the composition of the B Tournament at the famous festival in Wijk aan Zee was selected especially carefully by the organisers, who were able to ensure a solid FIDE category 13. More than half of the participants comprised the most promising young players of that time. There were the recent prodigies Sergey Karjakin and Magnus Carlsen, who were meeting for the first time, and some slightly older players: Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, Ivan Cheparinov, Daniel Stellwagen, Jan Smeets, Alejandro Ramirez and Alexandra Kosteniuk – all grandmasters. In short, in such a youth parade a good performance was a matter of prestige! Magnus arrived at the tournament not only fully prepared in the openings, but also with a more pragmatic approach. Even his entourage had changed. Alexandra Kosteniuk made this curious observation: 'The numerous snacks and drinks had disappeared from his table, and in Wijk aan Zee I never saw him wearing his favourite trainers.' What told was the favourable influence of Peter Heine Nielsen, who was playing alongside. Everyone saw how much he chatted with Carlsen during walks together. Outwardly, because of the difference in their weight categories, this pair looked very eccentric and provoked smiles on the faces of passers-by.

But let's return to the chess itself. Magnus's play was rather restrained: after winning in the 2nd round against Kosteniuk, he proceeded cautiously, as though awaiting his



opportunity. And after a series of seven draws the Norwegian as though gained his second wind and powerfully attacked the kings of Cheparinov and Nikolic. Moreover, the attack against the experienced Bosnian grandmaster was awarded the spectators' daily prize. Unfortunately, after joining the leading group, Magnus ran out of steam and lost his two remaining games. The result was only a modest 7th place. First prize and an invitation to the A Tournament the following year was won by Sergey Karjakin, who achieved an excellent result – 9½ out of 13.

There was reason for him to be distressed – progress to higher society had to be deferred for another year.

Game 10

I. Cheparinov – M. Carlsen

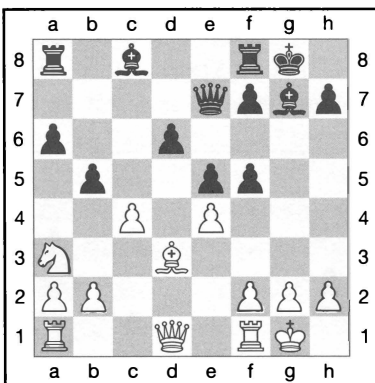
Wijk aan Zee B 2005

Sicilian Defence [B33]

1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. d4 cxd4
4. ♘xd4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 e5

The Chelyabinsk Variation assumed an honourable place in Magnus's opening arsenal, and he soon became famed as one of its main experts.

6. ♘db5 d6 7. ♙g5 a6 8. ♘a3 b5 9. ♙xf6
gx6 10. ♘d5 ♙g7 11. ♙d3 ♘e7 12. ♘xe7
♙xe7 13. c4 f5 14. 0-0 0-0



15. cxb5?!

A poor move, allowing Black a pawn centre, which in such a dynamic position is more

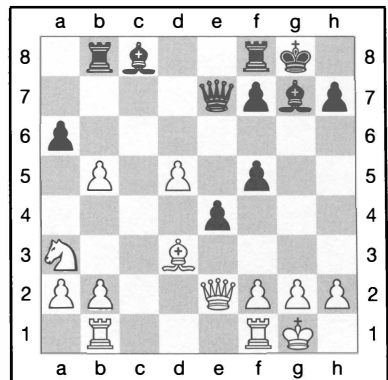
important than the sacrificed pawn.

The main continuations are 15. ♙f3 and 15. ♙h5, forcing Black to relieve the pawn tension, which is important in the fight for the d5-square.

15...d5 16. exd5 e4 17. ♙e2 ♙b8

17...♙b4 18. ♙c4 ♙xb2 19. ♘c2 axb5 20. ♙ab1 ♙f6 21. ♙xb5 f4 (Rogozenko) also came into consideration. The active pawn pair gives Black compensation for the sacrificed material (for example, if 22. ♙xe4?! there is 22...♙f5 23. ♙e2 f3).

18. ♙ab1



18...♙b6!

A typical trait of the young Carlsen was that he always had his eye on the opponent's



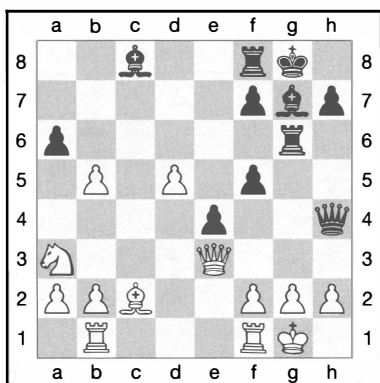
king. With the vigorous rook manoeuvre to the kingside he, as they say, takes the bull by the horns – the king will have no peace.

19. ♖e3 ♜g6 20. ♔c2

White pins his hopes on the b-pawn, since after 20. bxa6 it is not possible to exploit the passed a-pawn. In view of the fact that the g2-pawn is inadequately defended, in many variations Black is practically guaranteed perpetual check by a rook sacrifice: 20...♞h4 21. a7 ♔d4 (with the idea of 22. ♞xd4 ♜xg2+) 22. a8♞ (22. ♞g3 ♞xg3 23. hxg3 ♔xa7 24. ♔c2 e3 is risky for White) 22...♔xe3 23. fxe3 exd3 24. ♜f2 (if 24. ♞a7 there is 24...♜xg2+ 25. ♔xg2 ♞g4+) 24...♞e7 – Black retains the initiative and is threatening not only the e3-pawn, but also the move ...♔b7.

The passive 20. ♜fd1 ♞e5 21. ♔f1 allows Black to build up a dangerous attack: 21...f4 22. ♞c3 ♞h5.

20...♞h4



21. b6

This lone pawn hardly has any future, but it is not easy for White to choose a sound plan, whereas Black is ready to add fuel to his attack. For example, the latent activity

of his pieces is illustrated by the following variation: 21. bxa6? ♔xa6 22. ♜fd1 ♔h6 23. ♞e1 ♜xg2+! (now this sacrifice is appropriate) 24. ♔xg2 ♞g4+ 25. ♔h1 ♞f3+ 26. ♔g1 ♔e2! and Black has set up a mating construction. If 21. ♜fd1 White has to reckon with the advance of the f-pawn – 21...♞e8 22. d6 f4. He is also unable to set up a blockade by 21. f4 on account of 21...exf3 22. ♞xf3 ♔e5 23. h3 ♜g3 24. ♞e2 ♞xh3 etc.

21...♔h8!?

By including his second rook in the attack along the g-file, Magnus demonstrates that he is not thinking about a draw, which he could have forced by 21...♔d4 22. ♞xd4 ♜xg2+ 23. ♔xg2 ♞g4+.

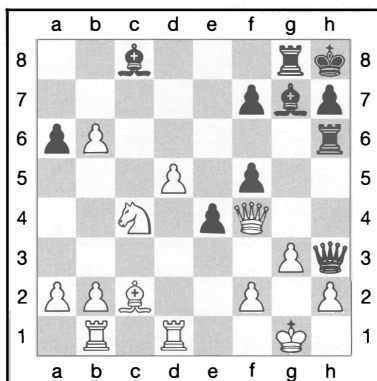
22. ♔c4 ♜g8

The murderous ...♔d4 is threatened.

23. g3 ♞h3 24. ♜fd1

A useful move, at the same time vacating a square for the king. If 24. ♞d2 there follows 24...f4! with the threat of 25...♜h6 (the immediate 24...♜h6 is parried by 25. f4). 24. f4?! immediately is not good because of 24...♔f8! with the threats of ...♔c5 and ...♜xg3.

24...♜h6 25. ♞f4





25... ♖f6?

A careless move, which could have cost Black the fruits of his efforts. He should have included the other bishop in the attack by playing 25... a5!, when it is doubtful whether White can prevent the development of the bishop at a6. For example: 26. b4 ♖c3 27. bxa5 (27. b5? ♖h4) 27... ♖a6 28. ♖b3 ♖h4 (in the event of 28... ♗xh2+ 29. ♖f1 ♖c8 30. ♖e2 ♖xc4 31. ♖xc4 ♖xc4+ 32. ♖e3 ♗h5 33. ♖e1 ♖d6 34. ♖bc1! Black's attack comes to a standstill) 29. ♗xh4 (29. ♗e3? ♗xh2+ leads to mate) 29... ♗xh4, winning the queen.

White is obliged to throw caution to the winds: 26. d6 ♖a6 27. b3 e3! 28. ♖d3 (evidently the only move, since 28. ♖d3? is bad: 28... e2 29. d7 ♗xh2+ 30. ♖f1 e2+! 31. ♖xe2 ♖e6+ 32. ♖d3 ♗g2 33. ♗xf5 ♖f6, and Black wins the queen) 28... ♗xh2+ 29. ♖f1 with sharp play, where White is apparently able to defend. Here are some sample variations:

- a) 29... ♖e8 30. ♖xe3 ♗h1+ 31. ♖e2 ♗c6 32. ♖d2 ♖xd3 33. ♖xd3 ♖xd6 34. ♗xf5 ♖g8 35. ♖e2, and the white pieces are excellently coordinated;
- b) 29... exf2 30. ♗xf2 (30. d7?! ♗g1+ 31. ♖e2 ♖e6+ is dangerous for White, while if 32. ♖e3 or 32. ♖e3 there follows 32... ♖h6) 30... ♗xf2+ 31. ♖xf2 ♖h2+ 32. ♖g1 ♖xc2 33. d7 ♖f6 34. ♖e1, and White's passed pawns compensate for the lost piece.

26. ♖e5?

After 26. b7! ♖xb7 27. ♖d6 ♗xh2+ 28. ♖f1 Black's attack would have come to a standstill, for example: 28... ♖g7 29. ♖xf5 (or 29. ♗xf5 ♖e7! 30. ♖xb7?! ♖f6) 29... ♗h1+ 30. ♖e2 ♗h5+ 31. g4 ♖xg4 32. ♗xh6 ♗xf5

33. ♖g1. Now, however, White is doomed.

26... ♖xe5 27. ♗xe5+ f6 28. ♗f4 ♖g4

There was a quicker win by 28... a5! 29. b4 axb4 30. ♖xb4 ♖a6 with the threat of playing the bishop to f3.

29. ♗c7 ♖g8 30. ♖e1

There is no way of saving the game. 30. b7 does not work because of 30... ♖xb7 31. ♗xb7 e3! with unavoidable mate. If 30. ♗f4, then 30... a5! is decisive.

30... ♗xh2+ 31. ♖f1 ♗h1+ 32. ♖e2 ♗f3+ 33. ♖d2 ♗xf2+ 34. ♖d1 f4 35. ♗c3 fxg3 36. ♖xe4 ♖g4+ 37. ♖c1 ♖c8

White resigned.

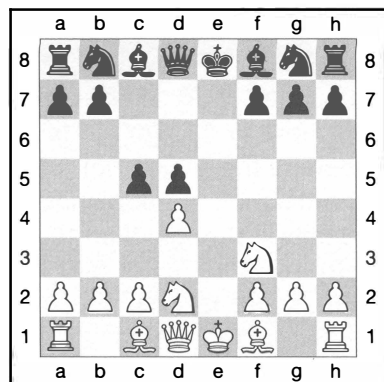
Game 11

M. Carlsen – P. Nikolic

Wijk aan Zee B 2005

French Defence [C08]

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. ♖d2 c5 4. exd5 exd5 5. ♖g3



5...c4!?

The experienced Nikolic aims to neutralise the fruits of his young opponent's home

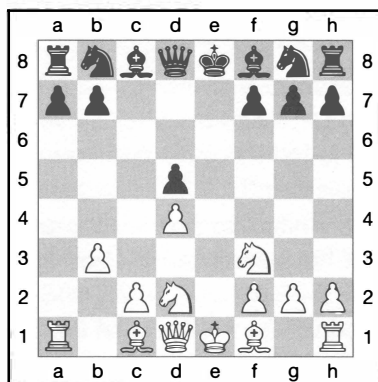


preparation and he avoids positions with an isolated d5-pawn. Another version of this idea – 5...♟c6 6. ♖b5 c4 – has its special features, since White has determined the position of his light-square bishop.

6. b3 cxb3 7. axb3

A pragmatic approach to the choice of move, typical of players of the computer generation. Magnus prefers a sound move, and declines to enter a discussion involving the intermediate exchange of the light-square bishops after 7. ♖b5+ ♟d7 8. ♜e2+ ♜e7 9. ♟xd7+ ♟xd7 10. axb3, which had occurred in several of Nikolic's games. For example, the game Adams–Nikolic (Neum 2002) continued 10...f6 11. ♟f1 ♜xe2+ 12. ♟xe2 ♟d6 13. ♟e3 ♟e7 14. ♟a3 ♟xa3 15. ♜xa3 ♟f7 16. ♟e1 ♟f8 17. ♟d3 ♟e6 18. c3 ♜hd8 19. ♟d2 ♟c6 20. ♟d1 ♜ac8 ½–½.

Apart from the exchange of the light-square bishops, also of interest is the practically unexplored 7...♟c6!?, not fearing the swift attack suggested half a century ago by Igor Bondarevsky: 8. ♜e2+ ♟e7 9. ♟e5! (nothing is given by 9. axb3 ♟f6 10. ♟a3 0–0 11. ♟xc6 ♟xa3 12. ♜xa3 ♜d6 13. ♜a5 ♜xc6=). The best here is 9...♜c7! (it is important to defend the knight, not forgetting about the defence of the bishop on e7) 10. axb3 (this is stronger than 10. c4 ♟f6 11. ♟xc6+ bxc6 12. axb3 0–0 13. 0–0 c5= or 10. ♟df3 f6!? 11. ♟xc6+ bxc6 12. ♟d3 bxc2=) 10...♟f6 11. ♟xc6+!? (or 11. ♟a3 0–0 12. ♟xc6 ♟xa3 13. ♜xa3 bxc6 14. 0–0 c5=) 11...bxc6 12. 0–0 0–0 13. ♜e1 ♜e8, and Black, alternating the ideas ...♟e7–b4 and ...c6–c5, obtains good play.



7...♟b4

This bishop manoeuvre was actively employed by David Bronstein. 7...♟d6 8. ♟d3 ♟e7 9. 0–0 0–0 10. ♜e1 ♟bc6 looks more natural. For example, the game Lebedev–Bronstein (Moscow Championship 1953) continued 11. c4 ♟b4! (here this bishop manoeuvre effectively counters the rook move to e1) 12. ♜c2 ♟g6 13. ♟b2 ♟e6 14. ♜ad1 ♜f6 15. ♜e3 ♟d6! 16. ♜c3 ♟f4 with the initiative for Black.

After the modest move 11. c3 Black completes his development: 11...♟f5 12. ♟f1 ♜e8, retaining a sound position, for example: 13. ♟a3 ♟xa3 14. ♜xa3 ♜d6 15. ♜a1 ♜f6 16. ♟e3 ♟xd3 17. ♜xd3 a6 18. b4 ♟a7 19. ♟e5 ♟b5 with the idea of ...♜ac8.

8. ♟e5

It is hard to catch Carlsen unawares, even in such a rare variation. He is following the game Svidler–Korchnoi (Groningen 1996). Black is not caused any particular problems by 8. ♟d3 ♟e7 9. 0–0 ♟bc6 10. ♟a3 0–0 or 8. ♟b5+ ♟d7 9. ♜e2+ ♟e7 10. 0–0 0–0 11. ♟a3 ♟xa3 12. ♜xa3 ♟bc6.

8...♟e7



Korchnoi played 8...♟f6 and after 9. ♔d3 0–0 10. 0–0 ♕c3 11. ♖a4 ♕d7 12. ♟xd7 ♟bxd7 13. ♟b1 ♕a5 he maintained the balance. But 10. ♕b2!? was possibly stronger.

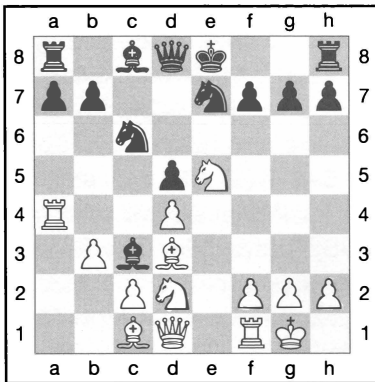
9. ♔d3 ♟bc6 10. 0–0

One gains the impression that Magnus had analysed this position at home, since he ignores the threat of ...♕b4–c3 with the win of a pawn (otherwise he would have played 10. ♕b2).

10...♕c3

Black accepts the challenge, although his retarded development undoubtedly puts his king in a dangerous position. It was not yet too late to castle – 10...0–0 11. ♕b2 with somewhat the better game for White.

11. ♖a4!



11...♕xd4

It looks provocative to play 11...♟xe5 12. dxe5 ♕d7 (or 12...♕xe5 13. ♖e1 ♕f6 14. ♖h5 ♟f8 15. ♟f3 g6 16. ♖h6+ ♟g8 17. ♖f4 with the better chances for White) 13. ♖h4 (after the passive 13. ♖a2 ♟c6 Black has an easy game in view of the threat of ...♟c6–b4), since the black king has not yet castled. Here are a few variations:

a) 13...♟g6 14. ♖h5 0–0 15. ♟b1 ♕b4 16. c3 ♕e7 17. f4 ♖c8 18. f5! with an irresistible attack in view of 18...♟xe5 19. f6. The trick 18...♖c6, with the idea after 19. f×g6 f×g6 of trapping the rook, also does not save Black in view of the simple 19. e6;

b) 13...♟c6 14. ♟f3 h6 15. ♕d2 ♕xd2 (weaker is 15...♕xe5 16. ♖h5 ♕f6 17. ♖xd5 ♖c8 18. ♖e2+ ♕e6 19. ♖e4 g6 20. ♕c4 with advantage to White) 16. ♖xd2 0–0 17. ♖e1 ♖e8 18. ♖f4 (18. ♖xh6 ♟xe5) 18...♖a5 19. b4 ♖b6 20. ♖xh6! g×h6 21. ♖xh6 ♟d8 22. ♖h7+ (it was not for the sake of perpetual check – 22. ♕h7+ ♟h8 23. ♕g6+ – that White sacrificed a rook) 22...♟f8 23. ♖h8+ ♟e7 24. ♖h4+ ♟f8 25. ♟g5 with a strong attack for White.

12. ♟xc6 ♟xc6 13. ♕a3 ♕e6 14. ♟f3 ♕b6?!

It was essential to neutralise the threats on the a3–f8 diagonal, which would have been achieved by 14...♕f6 15. ♖e1 ♕e7.

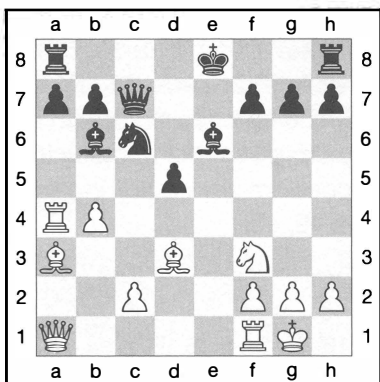
15. ♖a1!

A subtle manoeuvre, dispelling Black's illusions of hiding his king on its own wing: if 15...f6 there can follow 16. ♖e1 ♟f7 17. ♖f4 with the threat of ♟f3–g5+.

15...♖c7 16. b4!

The attack on the king was the 14-year-old Carlsen's natural element. He did not play 15. ♖a1 in order to limit himself to 16. ♖xg7, although this also gives a considerable advantage. With the pawn thrust Magnus warns his opponent about the danger of castling queenside.

(see next diagram)

**16...f6**

Black opts for artificial castling, realising that after 16...0-0 17. b5 ♖e7 18. ♖e1! he will be unable to withstand White's dangerous initiative. For example, 18...♗c5 19. ♗b2 ♜b6 20. ♖e2 f6 21. ♗d4 or 18...♖fe8 19. ♗b2 ♗f5 20. g4 ♜c5 21. ♖e2 ♗h6 22. ♗xg7 ♗xg4 23. ♗d4 ♜d6 24. ♖xe6 with an obvious advantage to White in both variations.

Let us examine the dangers awaiting Black after 16...0-0 17. b5:

- a) 17...♗a5 18. ♗b2 f6 19. ♗c3 ♗c4 20. ♗d4 ♗b8 (if 20...♗a5 there follows 21. ♜a2 and then 22. ♖a1) 21. ♖e1 ♖he8 22. ♖xa7! with a strong attack;
- b) 17...♗e7 18. ♗c1 (or 18. ♖c1 ♗b8 19. c4 dxc4 20. ♗xc4 ♜d7 21. ♗e5 ♜e8 22. ♗xe6 fxe6 23. ♗c4 ♗d4 24. ♗d6+ and White wins the exchange) 18...♗f5 (18...♗g6 19. ♗e3 ♗xe3 20. fxe3 ♜c5 21. ♖xa7 ♖xe3+ 22. ♗h1 ♜b6 23. ♗g5 with the threats of 24. ♗xe6 and 24. ♗xf7) 19. ♗xf5 ♗xf5 20. ♗f4 ♜c5 21. ♗e3 with an obvious advantage to White.

17. ♖e1 ♗f7

It would be wrong to criticise Nikolic for

this natural move. Black's position is so compromised that it is already hard to offer any good advice. Lev Psakhis considers it best to return the pawn – 17...♗e5, but even here White's attack is very strong: 18. ♗xe5 fxe5 19. b5!. An important interposition, preventing castling, which is possible, for example, in the event of 19. ♖xe5? 0-0!, and if 20. ♖xe6 there is 20...♗xf2+ 21. ♗h1 ♜d7, forking the rooks.

*Analysis diagram*

19...♜f7 20. ♖xe5 (if 20. ♖e2 there can follow 20...e4!? 21. ♗xe4 dxe4 22. ♖axe4 0-0-0 23. ♖xe6 ♗xf2+ 24. ♗h1 ♗d4, and Black somehow holds on) 20...♗xf2+ 21. ♗h1 0-0-0 22. ♗b2 with a dangerous initiative for White. We will trust the two-times USSR champion Lev Psakhis, an expert on this opening, but also enquire what *Rybka* thinks about it. Its verdict is pessimistic: 20...♗xf2+ 21. ♗h1 0-0-0 22. ♗c1! ♖hf8 23. ♖f4 ♜d7 24. ♜c3+ ♗b8 25. ♜b4! ♖f7 26. ♖xf7 ♜xf7 27. ♜f4!? (27. ♖xe6 ♜xe6 28. ♜f4+ ♗a8 29. ♜xf2 is also good) 27...♜xf4 28. ♗xf4 and Black cannot avoid loss of material.

19...0-0-0 20. ♖xe5 ♜f7 21. ♜e1 ♖he8 22. ♗c1! is also dangerous for Black – on the queenside too his king cannot find peace: 22...♗b8 23. ♗f4 ♗a8 24. ♜a1 with the threat of 25. ♖xa7+.

Fleeing with the king to the queenside



is realistic after the simplification recommended by Andrey Devyatkin: 19... e4!? 20. ♖xe4 dxe4 21. ♖axe4 0–0–0 22. ♖xe6 ♖d2 23. ♖e8+ ♖xe8 24. ♖xe8+ ♖d8 25. ♖xd8+ ♜xd8, but after 26. ♜c3+ ♖b8 27. ♜f3 he has to play a difficult end-game a pawn down.

18. b5 ♖a5

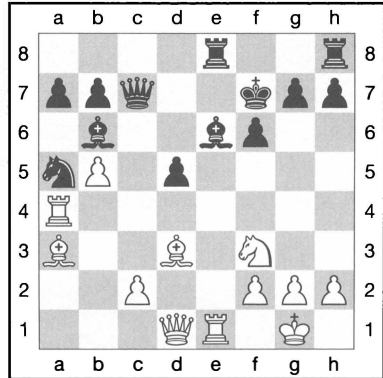
Putting the knight out of play leads to a rapid defeat. But also after the logical 18... ♖d8!? White retains a dangerous attack. Here is a sample variation: 19. ♜d1 ♜d7 20. ♖h4 ♖g8 21. ♖d4 ♖xd4 22. ♖xd4.

19. ♜d1!

The queen has done excellent work on the a1–h8 diagonal and it returns home in order to attack the king on the light squares. In the first instance ♖g5+ is threatened.

19... ♖ae8

There is no way of saving the game: 19... g6 (19... ♖c4 20. ♖f5!) 20. ♖g5+! f×g5 21. ♜f3+ ♖g7 22. ♖b2+ d4 23. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 24. ♖xd4+ ♖h6 25. h4 and White wins.



20. ♖g5+! f×g5 21. ♜f3+ ♖g8 22. ♖xe6

Black resigned.

The modest performance in Wijk aan Zee showed that the youngster needed time to improve his play. Carlsen took a time-out, probably the first in his career. However, the more than two months rest from tournaments was a wearisome period for Magnus. Strangely enough, the break did not benefit him, and a warm-up, planned on home territory at the Gausdal Classic Tournament (FIDE category 10), was frankly a failure. Magnus started extremely badly – half a point in the first four rounds, and he finished in a share of 6th–8th places. In a class of his own was Sergey Tiviakov, who scored 8½ points out of 9. Magnus's mood was improved by his participation in a series of rapid-play tournaments with a 25-minute time control. The most prestigious of these was the four-player Ciudad de Leon tournament in Spain with the participation of Anand, Kasimdzhanov and Shirov. True, he did not play the latter two, since in the semi-final Carlsen lost 1–3 to Anand, but the first meeting with one of the strongest players in the world was undoubtedly beneficial.

At the European Championship in Warsaw, Magnus justified the expectations of his supporters, scoring 8 points from 13 games (+5 –2 =6). In such a uniformly strong 'Swiss', this could be considered a successful result for a 14-year-old grandmaster. His performance in the double-round tournament in Biel with six grandmasters (FIDE category 16) was more modest. Magnus propped up the tournament table with 4 points from 10 games, in which he did not score a single win and suffered two defeats. Before the next category 16 tournament, the Samba Cup in Denmark, Carlsen warmed up at



home in the Gausdal Bygger'n Masters (1st place – 8 points out of 9) – and ‘burned himself out’. There was no time to regain his strength, since the Samba Cup started the very next day. The tournament in Skanderborg followed the same pattern as in Drammen: 8th place out of 10 contestants was undoubtedly a failure for Carlsen. The only faint consolation was a win over the first prize-winner, Baadur Jobava.

These set-backs can hardly have been conducive to a good mood before the main tournament of the year – the World Cup in Khanty-Mansiysk. If one sums up the series of failures, beginning with the Spanish team championship on the eve of 2005, where Magnus suffered four defeats, the picture was depressing, and the failures in his native Scandinavia were especially unpleasant: the Drammen, Gausdal Classic and Samba Cup tournaments. Less than a month remained to prepare for the World Cup. In youth, which is typified by optimism, it is easier to heal one's wounds.

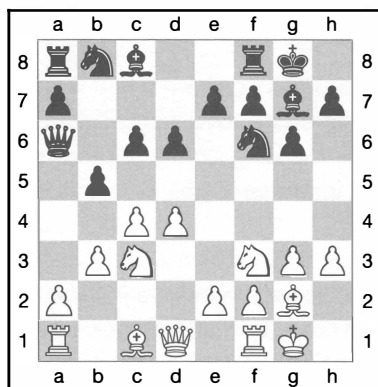
Game 12

M. Carlsen – K. Lie

Gausdal 2005

King's Indian Defence [E62]

This game is interesting for Carlsen's approach to the solving of opening problems in a non-standard situation, and also the conversion of a minimal advantage in an endgame with opposite-colour bishops with rooks.



**1. d4 ♖f6 2. ♖f3 g6 3. g3 ♘g7 4. ♙g2
0–0 5. 0–0 d6 6. c4 c6**

A rare branch of the King's Indian Defence, where Black attacks not the d4-pawn, but the c4-pawn.

7. ♘c3 ♜b6 8. h3 ♜a6 9. b3 b5

(see next diagram)

10. ♙g5!?

On encountering a comparatively rare variation, Carlsen decides to fight for the initiative from the very first moves. He sacrifices a pawn, hoping to exploit the retarded development of the black pieces. Especially since experience of playing this position in

a routine manner indicates that Black has quite good counterplay. For example, the attempt to attack the b5-pawn – 10. cxb5 cxb5 11. ♜d3 – achieves its aim only after the awkward 11...♙d7 12. ♙g5!, when the bishop on d7 merely hinders Black in completing the development of his queenside, while at the same time the exchange on f6 followed by ♘d5 is threatened. But 11...b4 is far stronger, and the attempt to get at the rook on a8 – 12. ♘e1 – is parried by 12...♙xh3! 13. ♙xh3 (the mass elimination 13. ♙xa8 ♙xf1 leads to the loss of a pawn) 13...bxc3 14. ♙g2 d5 with good play for Black.



The main continuation is considered to be 10. ♖d2 bxc4 11. ♖xc4 ♕e6, where Black has quite good counterplay. In his time Magnus's trainer Agdestein became aware of this in a game with Klaus Bischoff (Dortmund 1987), which continued 12. ♖e3 ♖bd7 13. ♕b2 ♖fc8 14. ♖c1 ♖ab8 15. ♖d2 ♖b6 16. f4 c5 17. d5 ♕d7 18. ♖a1 ♖a5 with active play for Black.

10...bxc4 11. bxc4 ♖xc4 12. ♖c1 ♕a6

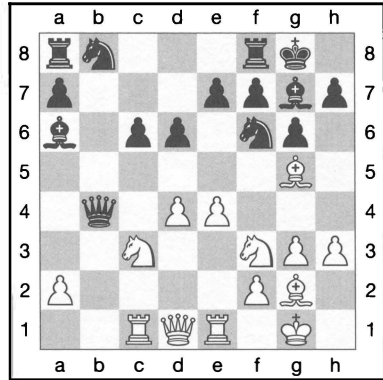
White's plans include e2–e4 followed by ♖c3–d5. Therefore it is useful to clarify the intentions of the active bishop on g5 – 12... h6!?, which is usually practised in King's Indian set-ups. Now it is illogical to play 13. ♕xf6 ♕xf6 14. ♖e4 ♖xa2 15. ♖xf6+ exf6, since the position is simplified, and it is not easy for White to breach the black pawn barricade. Igor Stohl considers 13. ♕d2 ♖e6 14. ♖e1 ♖bd7 (14... ♕a6 15. e4 ♖c8 is also possible, but not 15... ♕c4?! because of 16. e5! ♖h7 17. exd6 ♖xd6 18. ♖e4 ♖d5 19. ♖e5) 15. e4 ♖b6 16. e5 ♖fd5 17. ♖xd5 cxd5, and here 18. ♖c7 retains the initiative for White.

13. ♖e1

The only known game at that time, Berkes–Stokke (Stockholm 2003), continued 13. e4 h6 14. ♕d2 e5 15. dxe5 dxe5 16. ♖d5 cxd5?! (an insufficiently justified queen sacrifice; Black should have decided on 16... ♖xa2, when all White can do is force a draw – 17. ♖a1 ♖b2 18. ♖b1 ♖a2) 17. ♖xc4 ♕xc4 18. ♖xe5! ♕xf1 19. ♖xf1 ♖xe4? (19... dxe4) 20. ♕b4 ♖d8 21. ♖xf7! ♖c6 22. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 23. ♕a5 1–0.

13...♖b4 14. e4

(see next diagram)



14...e5?

Understandably, Black is tired of being under pressure, but if he did not like 14... ♖d8 15. ♖d2 with the threat of 16. ♖d5, then 14... h6 15. ♕d2 ♖b6 would have enabled him to defend. In returning his extra pawn, Black ends up in a strategically inferior position in view of his weak pawn on c6.

15. dxe5 dxe5 16. ♖xe5 ♖a5

If 16... ♖e8? White has the decisive 17. ♖xf7! ♖xf7 18. e5 ♖h5 19. ♖d5! ♖b2 20. ♖c7.

17. ♖xf7

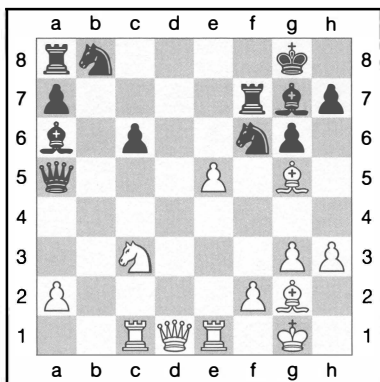
Here this sacrifice is not so effective. Playing for brilliancy might merely have brought Carlsen unnecessary problems. The simple 17. ♕xf6 ♕xf6 18. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 19. ♖d5 ♕e5 20. ♖xc6 would have enabled White to win a pawn without any brilliancy.

17...♖xf7 18. e5

(see next diagram)

18...♖bd7?

Black is rattled, and he does not even make an attempt to play on with an extra knight. Apparently, after 18... ♖e8 he was afraid of the attack 19. ♖e4! (19. ♕d8 ♖b4 20. e6



is parried by 20... $\text{E}f5$ 21. $\text{Q}e4$ $\text{E}c4$ 22. $a3$ $\text{W}b3$) 19... $h6$ (the pawn is taboo: 19... $\text{E}xe5$? 20. $\text{Q}c5$ $\text{E}f5$ 21. $\text{W}b3+$) 20. $e6!$ $\text{E}f5$ 21. $\text{Q}d6$ $h\times g5$ 22. $e7!$ and Black has no defence. However, the threat of the e-pawn's advance could have been averted by the bishop retreat 19... $\text{E}c8$, although here too White's initiative is very dangerous: 20. $\text{Q}c5$ $\text{E}f5$ 21. $\text{W}b3+$ $\text{Q}h8$ 22. $g4!$ $\text{E}xg5$ 23. $\text{W}f7$ $\text{Q}c7$ 24. $\text{E}ed1$ $\text{Q}d7$ 25. $\text{Q}xd7$ $\text{E}xd7$ 26. $\text{E}xd7$ $\text{W}xe5$ 27. $\text{E}xc7$.

19. $e\times f6$

But here playing for brilliancy by 19. $\text{E}xc6!$ $\text{E}c8$ 20. $\text{Q}d5$ $\text{Q}xd5$ 21. $e6$ was quite appropriate. However, the move in the game also ensures White an advantage.

19... $\text{Q}xf6$ 20. $\text{E}xf6$ $\text{E}xf6$

If 20... $\text{E}xf6$ there would have followed 21. $\text{Q}d5!$ $\text{E}f7$ 22. $\text{Q}e7+$ $\text{Q}h8$ 23. $\text{Q}xc6$.

21. $\text{Q}e4$ $\text{E}e7$

It is important to retain this bishop – otherwise there is nothing with which to defend the dark squares. If 21... $\text{E}b5$, then 22. $\text{Q}xf6+$ $\text{E}xf6$ 23. $\text{E}e5!$ with the threats $\text{E}xc6$ and $\text{W}b3+$ is good enough to win, but there is also a spectacular computer solution: 23. $\text{E}d5+!$ $\text{Q}f8$ 24. $\text{W}d4!$ $\text{W}d8$

25. $\text{E}e6!$. If 21... $\text{W}xa2$? there also follows 22. $\text{Q}xf6+$ $\text{E}xf6$ 23. $\text{W}d4!$ and Black has no defence: 23... $\text{E}f7$ 24. $\text{E}xc6$ $\text{W}a5$ 25. $\text{E}ce6$.

22. $\text{E}xc6$ $\text{E}b7$

The black pieces coordinate more harmoniously after 22... $\text{E}d8$ 23. $\text{W}a1$ $\text{E}b5$ 24. $\text{E}e6$ $\text{E}c4$ 25. $\text{E}e5$ $\text{W}b6$.

23. $\text{E}e6$ $\text{E}d8$

If 23... $\text{W}xa2$? White wins by 24. $\text{E}xe7!$ $\text{E}xe7$ 25. $\text{Q}f6+$ $\text{Q}f7$ 26. $\text{E}xe7+$ $\text{Q}xe7$ 27. $\text{Q}d5+!$ $\text{Q}f8$ 28. $\text{W}f3+$.

24. $\text{W}e2$ $\text{E}xe4$

Black straightforwardly (24... $\text{W}f5$?! 25. $\text{E}xe7!$ $\text{E}xe7$ 26. $\text{Q}f6+$) goes in for opposite-colour bishops. But in the presence of other pieces, especially the queens, hopes based on this factor are illusory: a bishop which has no opponent is dangerous in an attack on the king.

25. $\text{W}xe4$ $\text{E}c5$ 26. $\text{E}e2$ $\text{E}df8$ 27. $\text{W}d5!$

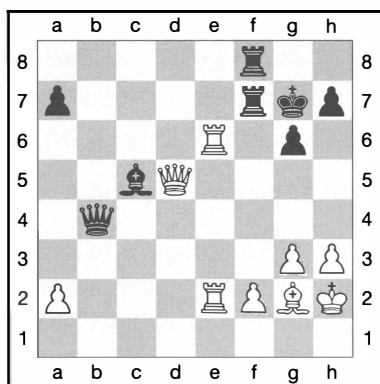
A dangerous pin with an X-ray along the a2–g8 diagonal.

27... $\text{W}b4$

Black does not sense the danger. It was essential to 'unpin' the king – 27... $\text{Q}g7$ and if 28. $\text{Q}h2$ to offer the exchange of queens by 28... $\text{E}b6$. It should be mentioned that 28... $\text{E}xf2$? is not possible because of 29. $\text{E}xf2$ $\text{E}xf2$ 30. $\text{E}e7+$!, when the mating attack costs Black his queen: 30... $\text{Q}h6$ 31. $g4$ $\text{W}d2$ 32. $g5+$! $\text{W}xg5$ 33. $\text{E}xh7+$.

28. $\text{Q}h2$ $\text{Q}g7$

Not 28... $\text{E}xf2$? 29. $\text{E}xf2$ $\text{E}xf2$ 30. $\text{E}xg6+$.



29. ♖e5+?!

There was a quick win by 29. ♖e4! ♖a3 30. ♖e5+ ♜g8 31. ♜h4 ♖d3 (if 31... ♜g7 there is 32. ♜xg6! h×g6 33. ♔d5+ with a mating attack) 32. ♖xc5, with an extra bishop for White.

29...♜g8 30. a3

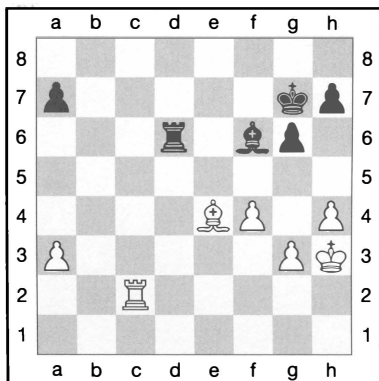
This move allows Black to exchange the queens, which eases the problem of defending his king. The threat of 30... ♖d4 could have been parried by 30. f4!, having in mind the variation 30... ♖d4? 31. ♖x d4 ♔d4 32. ♔d5! ♜g7 33. ♖6e4, but by playing 30... ♜f5 Black would have forced the queen to retreat to a less imposing position: 31. ♖a1 ♔d4 32. ♖d1 ♖d8 etc. Also possible is 30. ♖e4 ♜f5 31. ♜xg6+ h×g6 32. ♖e6+, winning the queen, but how to convert the advantage is not clear.

Playing to surround the bishop also does not achieve its aim: 30. ♖c6 ♔d4 31. ♖d5 ♔b2! (from the long diagonal the bishop guarantees its king a shelter at g7) 32. ♖c5 ♔f6 33. ♖c7 ♜g7.

30...♖d4! 31. ♖x d4 ♔x d4 32. f4 ♜g7

The game has gone into an ending which is not easy to win.

33. ♔d5 ♔f6 34. h4 ♖d7 35. ♔e4 ♖fd8 36. ♜h3 ♖d6 37. ♖x d6 ♖x d6 38. ♖c2



Endings with opposite-colour bishops are Carlsen's forte. On many subsequent occasions he was able to demonstrate the superiority of his bishop. In the given specific position it is worth nothing that White's extra pawn is on the kingside, where Black's resources are concentrated. Therefore Carlsen keeps both wings in view.

38...♖d7?!

Passive defence makes things easier for White. 38... ♖a6!? was more critical: 39. ♖c7+ (after 39. ♖a2 ♖e6! 40. ♔d5 ♖e3 Black attacks the g3-pawn, practically forcing the exchange of rooks: 41. a4 ♔c3 42. ♖a3 ♔d4) 39... ♜h6 40. h5 ♖x a3 41. ♖c6 ♖e3, pursuing the bishop. After the transition into a rook ending by 42. ♔xg6 h×g6 43. ♖x f6 ♜x h5 44. ♖f7 ♜h6 45. ♖x a7 Black has real chances of a draw.

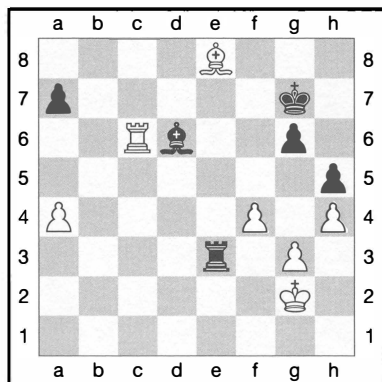
39. ♜g4 ♔e7 40. a4 ♖d4 41. ♔c6 h5+?!

This impulsive move merely creates a weakness on g6. 41... ♜f6 was more logical.

42. ♜h3 ♔d6 43. ♜g2 ♔b4 44. ♜h3



♙d6 45. ♖e8 ♜d3 46. ♜g2 ♞e3
47. ♜c6!



47...♞e6?

The rook ending after 47...♞e6 48. ♜xd6 ♞e7 49. ♜f3 or 47...♙xf4 48. ♜xg6+ ♜f8 49. gx f4 ♞xe8 50. ♞a6 is clearly better for White, who has an active rook. But moving into a pin leads to the loss of the a7-pawn. More was promised by a symmetric attack on the g3-pawn – 47...♙b4! 48. ♙xg6 ♙e1 49. ♙xh5 ♞xg3+ 50. ♜f1 (weaker is 50. ♜h2?! ♞a3 51. ♞a6 ♙xh4) 50...♞e3 51. ♞g6+ ♜f8 52. ♞g4 ♙d2 53. ♜f2 ♞e4 54. f5 ♞xg4 55. ♙xg4 with real drawing chances.

48. ♞a6 ♜f8 49. ♙b5 ♞f6 50. ♙d3!

It is useful to gain a tempo. The rest does not require any commentary.

50...♜g7 51. ♞xa7+ ♜f8 52. a5 ♙b4
53. a6 ♜d6 54. ♜c7 ♞xd3 55. ♞c8+
♜g7 56. a7 ♞d2+ 57. ♜f3 ♞d3+
58. ♜e4 ♞a3 59. a8♞

Black resigned.

Game 13

B. Jobava – M. Carlsen

Skanderborg 2005

Queen's Indian Defence [E12]

1. c4 ♫f6 2. d4 e6 3. ♫f3 b6 4. ♙g5

It was not hard for Magnus to prepare for this game – at that time this variation was Jobava's main weapon against the Queen's Indian Defence.

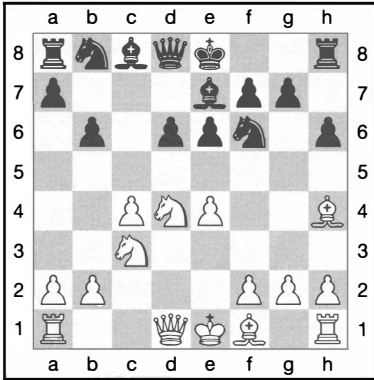
4...h6 5. ♙h4 ♙e7 6. ♫c3 c5

Carlsen follows the path of Ivanchuk in his recent game with Jobava at the Capablanca Memorial (Havana 2005), in which White suffered a crushing defeat. The classical 6...♙b7 7. e3 ♫e4 seemed rather tedious to him.

7. e4

The following continuation is practically unexplored: 7. d5 ♫xd5 8. ♫xd5 (the exchanging operation 8. cxd5 ♙xh4 9. dxe6 fxe6 10. ♞c2 with the threat of ♞e4+ is parried by the simple 10...♙f6 11. ♞g6+ ♜f8 with an acceptable game for Black, who is able to stabilise the position of his king thanks to the threat of the exchange 12...♙xc3+ 13. bxc3 ♞f6) 8...♙xh4 9. ♫xh4 ♙b7 (weaker is 9...exd5 10. ♞xd5 ♫c6 11. ♫f5) 10. g3 (after 10. ♫f3 exd5 11. cxd5 0–0 12. e3 ♞f6 13. ♞b3 ♫a6 Black successfully completes his development, retaining some initiative) 10...exd5 11. ♙g2 0–0 12. 0–0 ♞f6 13. ♙xd5 (or 13. b3 ♞e8 14. e3 ♞e5 with the idea of 15. cxd5 g5!) 13...♙xd5 14. ♞xd5 ♫c6 15. b3 ♞ad8 16. ♞ad1 ♞fe8 17. e3 ♞e5 18. ♞d6 ♞e6, and Black maintains the balance.

7...cxd4 8. ♫xd4 d6

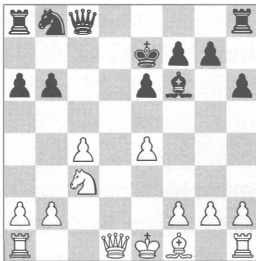


9. ♖db5!

With the idea of breaking up Black's king-side pawns by exchanging on f6. However, as was shown by the Jobava–Ivanchuk game, it proves to be illusory.

9...a6 10. e5!?

This move, giving the play an almost forcing character, was undoubtedly prepared at home. Thereby Jobava indirectly admits the effectiveness of the pawn sacrifice made by Ivanchuk: 10. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 11. ♖xd6+ ♗e7 12. ♖xc8+ ♖xc8.



Analysis diagram

13. ♖a4?! (13. ♖f3 followed by ♗e2 and 0–0 was stronger) 13...♞d8 14. ♖b3 ♖d7 15. ♖a3+, and after 15...♖c5 16. ♗e2 (not 16. ♖xb6? ♖c6 17. ♖xa8 because of 17...♗xb2! 18. ♖xb2 ♖xe4+ 19. ♖e2 ♖d3+ 20. ♗d2 ♖f4+ and Black wins the queen) 16...♖c6 17. ♖xc5 ♖xc5!. Ivanchuk offers

to go into an endgame: 18. ♖xc5+ ♖xc5 19. ♖b1 ♖ab8 20. b3 ♗c3+ 21. ♗f1 ♖d2, which, despite the pawn deficit, is advantageous to Black. The game continued 18. b4 ♖g5 19. ♖d1 ♖xg2 20. b5+ ♗e8 21. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 22. ♗f3 ♖g5 23. ♖xa6 ♖d2+ 24. ♗f1 ♗d4! 25. ♗e2 ♗c5 26. ♖g3 ♖xa2 27. ♖xg7? ♖d1+, and Black soon won.

10...dxe5

Realising that 10...axb5 11. exf6 gxf6 (11...♗xf6?! 12. ♗xf6 ♖xf6 13. ♖xd6 is dangerous for Black) 12. ♖xb5 ♖c6 13. ♗g3 leaves White with an enduring initiative without any risk, Carlsen goes in for an exchange sacrifice. His central pawn mass promises him sufficient compensation.

11. ♗xf6

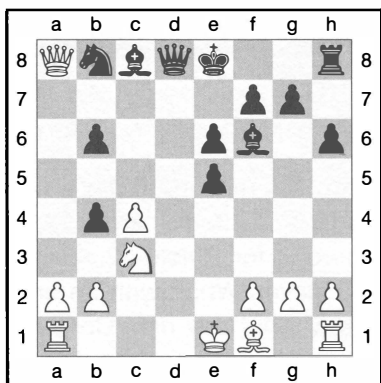
Weaker is 11. ♖f3? e4! 12. ♖xe4 axb5 13. ♖xf6+ gxf6 14. ♖xa8 ♗b4+ 15. ♗e2 ♖d2+ 16. ♗f3 e5 with a very dangerous attack for Black. For example: 17. ♖d5 (White loses quickly after 17. ♖xb8 ♖f4+ 18. ♗e2 0–0) 17...♖f4+ (as a reserve variation there is a draw: 17...♗b7 18. ♖xb7 ♖f4+) 18. ♗e2 0–0! 19. ♗g3 ♖f5 20. ♖d3 (if 20. ♗d1 there is the decisive 20...♗b7! 21. ♖xb7 ♖d8+) 20...♖g5 (with the threat of ...♖c6 and ...♖d8) 21. ♖e3 ♖g6 22. ♖c1 ♖xc4 etc.

11...♗xf6

If Black interposes the exchange 11...♖xd1+ 12. ♖xd1 axb5 13. ♗xg7 (after 13. ♗xe5 ♖d7! 14. ♗xg7 ♖g8 15. ♖xb5 ♖xa2 16. ♗xh6 ♖xb2 Black has quite good counterplay) 13...♖g8 14. ♗xh6 White wins a pawn without sufficient compensation for the opponent.

**12. ♖f3!**

White wins the exchange, but Magnus manages to find defensive resources.

12...axb5 13. ♖xa8 b4!

The moment of truth for the assessment of the opening idea devised by Jobava, who apparently underestimated this possibility, expecting only 13...♗d7 14. ♗xb5 0-0 15. 0-0-0 with advantage to White. However, Carlsen has planned a more active role for the knight, by preparing a route for it to d4, from where it controls both wings.

14. ♗e4

After 14. ♖xb8 bxc3 15. ♖d1 ♗d7 16. ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 17. bxc3 e4 the pair of strong bishops fully compensates for the sacrificed exchange.

14. ♖a4+ looks stronger: 14...♗c6 (in the event of 14...♗d7 15. ♖xb4 ♗c6 16. ♖d6 ♗e7 17. ♖d1 ♗d4 Black has some compensation for the exchange, but White's chances are nevertheless preferable) 15. ♖xc6+ (activity with 15. ♗d5 is dubious: 15...♗b7 16. ♖b5 0-0 17. ♖xb6 exd5 18. ♖xb7 ♗d4, and the powerful knight on d4 enables Black to develop a

strong initiative; 16. ♗xb4 ♖d4! 17. ♗xc6 ♖e4+ 18. ♗d1 ♗xc6 is also advantageous to Black) 15...♗d7 16. ♖d6 bxc3 17. bxc3 e4 18. 0-0-0 ♗e7 (18...♗xc3 19. ♗e2 ♖c8 with the idea of ...♗a4 is also possible) 19. ♖d4 ♗a4 (19...♗f6 20. ♖xe4 ♖c7 21. ♖a8+ ♗c8 is also good) 20. ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 21. ♖d4 ♗c6 22. ♗e2 ♗c7 followed by ...♗e7. Carlsen assesses this position as favourable for Black.

14...♗d7 15. ♗xf6+

White hurries to deform Black's kingside pawns, whereas he also had other possibilities. True, 15. ♗d6+ is unconvincing: 15...♗e7 16. ♗b5 (or 16. ♖d1 ♗c6 17. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 18. ♗e4 ♗d4) 16...♗c6 17. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 18. 0-0-0 ♗d4 with sufficient compensation for the exchange. But 15. ♖d1, keeping the exchange on f6 in reserve, deserved serious consideration: 15...♗c6 (15...♗e7 16. c5 0-0 17. ♖a7 favours White) 16. ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 17. c5 bxc5 18. ♗xc5 ♗d4 19. ♗xd7 ♗xd7 20. ♗d3, and White's position is preferable (Carlsen). 17. ♗xf6 gxf6 18. g3 ♗c7 19. ♗g2 ♗d4 20. f4 ♗c6 21. 0-0 also looks quite good, diverting the knight to f5 for the defence of the f-pawns.

15...gxf6 16. c5

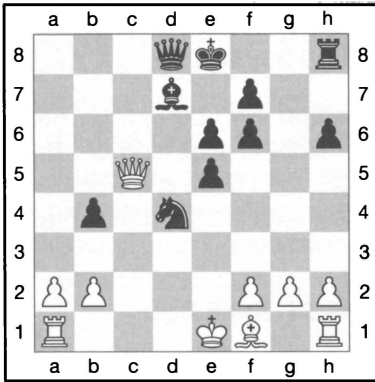
White is aiming for a clear pawn structure on the queenside, but 16. 0-0-0 was more logical, after which Carlsen was intending to play 16...♗c6 17. ♖a4 (of course, the queen exchange 17. ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 followed by ...♗d4 would satisfy Black) 17...♗e7, and with a subsequent ...♖a8 Black activates his forces.

16...bxc5 17. ♖a7 ♗c6 18. ♖xc5 ♗d4!

After carrying out this key defensive ma-



noeuvre, Black can consider that he has solved his opening problems.



19. 0–0–0?

Jobava chooses a bad post for his king, where it may come under attack by the active black pieces. But it was not an easy choice. For example, if 19. ♔d3 Black can fight for the initiative: 19...♖a8! (after 19...♖e7 20. ♖b6 0–0 21. 0–0 ♔c6 22. ♖fc1 Black would have problems with the defence of his b4-pawn) 20. ♖xb4 ♖g8! 21. a3 (if 21. 0–0–0, then 21...♖xa2 is possible, not fearing 22. ♖b8+ ♔e7 23. ♖xg8, since Black is guaranteed a draw by perpetual check: 23...♔b3+ 24. ♔c2 ♔d4+ 25. ♔c1 ♔b3+, as after 25. ♔c3? ♖b3+ 26. ♔d2 ♖xb2+ 27. ♔e1 e4! White is in danger of losing) 21...♖g4!. An important intermediate move, the virtues of which are revealed in an assessment of the direct capture 21...♖xg2 22. 0–0–0 ♖xf2 23. ♖hg1, with an unclear game. Now, after the queen moves, the rook invasion follows in a more favourable situation: 22. ♖d6 ♖xg2 23. 0–0–0 ♖xf2 24. ♖hg1 ♖c6+!, or 22. ♖c3 ♖xg2 23 0–0–0 ♖xf2 24. ♖hg1 ♖c6!. Evidently White should have restricted himself to the modest 19. f3, when Black could again offer the exchange of queens by 19...♖e7.

19...♖e7!

Magnus demonstrates a deep understanding of the position. The endgame with the powerful knight on d4 is advantageous to Black.

20. ♖xe7+

After 20. ♖b6 0–0 21. ♔d3 ♔c6 the situation favours Black, since he can develop an attack on the white king by playing his rook to a8 and his queen to d5.

20...♔xe7 21. ♔b1 ♔c6 22. f3

If 22. ♖g1 again 22...♖g8 is possible, with the idea of ...♔f3.

22...♖g8 23. ♖c1 f5 24. ♖c4 ♖b8!

Subtle conduct of the endgame – now it is not easy for White to complete his development. In a superior position it is important to maintain the tension, by forcing the defending side to solve the most difficult problems. The tempting continuation 24...♔d5 25. ♖xb4 ♔xf3! 26. a4 would have given White some chances, associated with his pair of connected passed pawns.

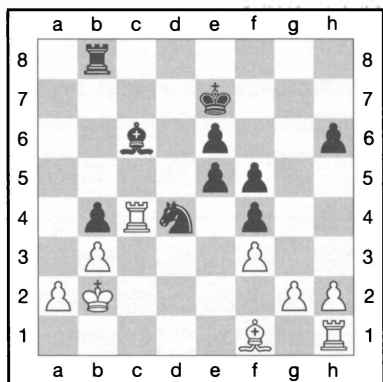
25. b3

25. ♔d3 is not possible because of 25...♔b5. The attempt to develop the h1-rook does not work, since if 25. h4 there is 25...f4 (25...h5 26. ♖h3 f4 27. g3 ♖g8 is also good) 26. h5 ♔d6 27. ♖h4 ♔f5, and the rook has to return home.

25...f4 26. ♔b2 f5

The pawn mass displays its character! The pair of central pawns is irresistible.

(see next diagram)

**27. h4**

If 27. ♕d3 there would have followed 27...♕d5 28. ♖c7+ ♜d6 29. ♖g7 e4 with advantage to Black.

**27...♜d6 28. h5 ♕d5 29. ♖c1 e4
30. fxe4**

If 30. ♕c4, then 30...♖g8 31. ♖h2 e3 was possible.

30...fxe4 31. ♖h4 ♜e5

31...♖f8 32. ♖g4 ♖f5 was also good, tying the rook to the h5-pawn, followed by ... e6–e5 and ...♖g5.

32. ♖g4 e3 33. ♖g6

The position also cannot be held after 33. ♖e1 ♜f5 34. ♕e2 ♖d8 35. ♖g6 ♕e4, while if 33. ♕d3 there is the decisive 33... e2! 34. ♖e1 (34. ♖g6 ♖c8!) 34...♖c8 35. ♖g6 ♖c3.

33...♕e4 34. ♖xh6 ♖g8

Magnus appears to be enjoying the position, avoiding the win of a piece by 34...e2.

**35. ♖c5+ ♜d6 36. ♖c4 ♜d5 37. ♜c1
e2 38. ♖xd4+ ♜xd4 39. ♕xe2 ♖xg2
40. ♕d1**

After 40. ♜d1 Black casts a mating net with 40...♜e3!.

40...♖xa2

White resigned.

The World Cup in Khanty-Mansiysk – analogous to the world championship on the knock-out system – was another reform of the world championship, with a slight lowering of its status. The top ten in the tournament gained the right to take part in the Candidates tournament of the next individual world championship cycle in 2007. The knock-out event of 128 grandmasters, held in a remote part of Russia, proved to be a turning point in Carlsen's career on the eve of his 15th birthday. For Magnus this was a second test in matches with the strongest players in the world. True, the first one – in 2004 – had ended in the very first round, but the maturing Carlsen, who had joined the group of 'twenty-six hundreds' on the world rating list, now had the right to hope for a more successful performance.

This was how his performance was assessed by the experienced grandmaster Viorel Bologan: 'The revelation of the tournament was Carlsen. He is distinguished by his classical method of playing – he plays competently and calculates well. For the moment he still displays a tendency to play for little traps, but in principle this is minimal. Over the last two years he has been mercilessly beaten in various tournaments, and unexpectedly this path to success has proved the shortest. Now he himself will do the



beating.' In his preparations for the tournament Magnus had greatly improved his opening groundwork. 'It is apparent that he is doing such work on his opening repertoire', Mikhail Gurevich said in admiration, 'that experienced grandmasters don't know what to play against him!' The youngster had also greatly improved his endgame technique.

In contrast to Libya, in Russia Carlsen played seven stages: four in the main tournament and three in the additional fight for qualification to the Candidates tournament. His result could have been even better, since he missed a real chance to go through to the quarter-final of the main tournament, when in his match with Evgeny Bareev he lost a rapid game which was practically decided. But even without this his list of wins was impressive: among those defeated were Zurab Azmaiparashvili, Farrykh Amonatov, Ivan Cheparinov, Joël Lautier, Vladimir Malakhov and Gata Kamsky.

Game 14

M. Carlsen – F. Amonatov

World Cup, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005
Sicilian Defence [B90]

1. e4 c5 2. ♖f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4
 ♙f6 5. ♘c3 a6 6. ♕e3 e5 7. ♘f3

The main continuation is 7. ♘b3 ♕e6 8. f3 with the development of an attack on the kingside. The move in the game is also very popular and indicates that Carlsen is aiming for positional play.

7...♗c7 8. a4 b6

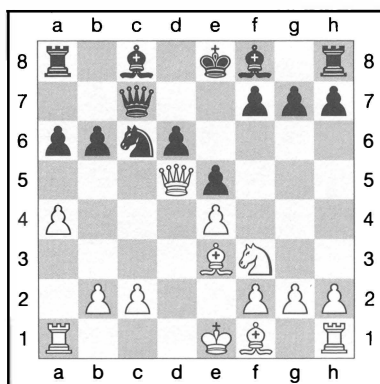
Black radically prevents a4–a5, but this move has drawbacks, which Carlsen is able to disclose. 8...♕e7 9. a5 0–0 is more often played. For example, the game Jang Jong–Sakaev, (China–Russia match 2004) continued 10. ♕e2 ♘c6 11. ♕b6 ♗d7 12. ♘d2 ♘b4 13. ♘c4 d5! 14. exd5 ♘fxd5 15. ♘xd5 ♘xd5 16. ♕f3 ♕b4+ 17. ♖f1! ♘xb6 18. ♘xb6 ♗xd1+ 19. ♖xd1 ♖b8 20. ♖d5! ♖e8? (20...♕e6!? 21. ♖xe5 ♖fd8 came into consideration, with sufficient compensation for the pawn) 21. c3 ♕f8 22. ♘xc8! ♖bxc8 23. ♕e4! with advantage to White in view of the weakness of the a6/b7 pawn pair.

9. ♕d5

9. ♕g5 is regarded as the main continuation.

9...♘xd5 10. ♗xd5 ♘c6

After 10...♕b7 it is not easy for Black to complete his development: 11. ♗b3 ♕xe4 12. ♕c4 ♗b7 13. 0–0–0 ♕xf3 (if 13...♕g6 there follows 14. ♘h4 ♕h5 15. f3! ♘c6 16. ♕xb6 or 16. ♗xb6 with advantage to White) 14. gxf3 ♘c6 15. ♖b1! (15. ♕d5 b5 16. f4 is also good) 15...♖b8 (15...♘a5 16. ♕d5) 16. ♕d5 with an obvious positional advantage for White.



11. ♘g5



The less ambitious 11. ♖d2 ♕e7 12. ♘c4 0–0 allows Black to complete his development. The game Kir. Georgiev–Istratescu (Ohrid 2001) continued 13. ♘d5 ♕e6 14. 0–0 ♖ac8 15. ♖ac1 ♖b8! 16. ♖fd1 ♖d7 with equal chances.

11... ♖b8

It is not possible for Black to complete his queenside development normally – 11... ♘b7? 12. ♘xb6! ♖xb6 13. ♖xf7+ ♔d8 14. a5! and if 14... ♖xa5 15. ♖e6+ White gives mate in three moves.

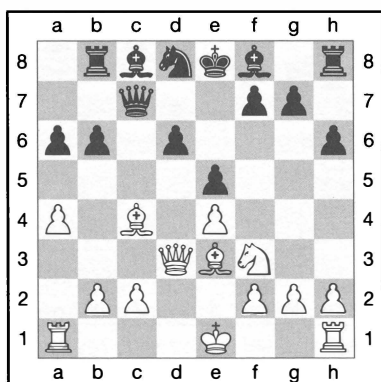
12. ♘c4

Carlsen's favourite procedure from his youth: if it is possible to put the king under fire, he does this.

12... ♖d8 13. ♖d3 h6

Black is impatient to drive away the annoying knight. To be fair, it should be mentioned that the theory of this variation was largely unexplored. 13... ♕e7 is stronger, when the following line is not dangerous: 14. ♘xa6 ♘xa6 15. ♖xa6 ♖xc2 16. ♖b5+ ♖c6 17. 0–0 ♖xb5 18. axb5 ♘g5 19. ♘g5 ♖e6 20. ♘e3 ♖c7 21. ♖fc1 ♖xb5 22. ♘xb6 ♔d7 with a reasonable endgame for Black (Kulaots–Leyva, Olympiad, Turin 2006).

14. ♖f3



14... ♖a8

14... ♕e7 is no longer possible, since after 15. ♘xa6 ♘xa6 16. ♖xa6 Black's strategic deficiencies are obvious. Let us continue: 16... ♖xc2 17. ♖b5+ ♖c6 (17... ♔f8? 18. a5) 18. ♔e2! 0–0 19. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 20. ♖hc1 ♖fc8 21. ♖c3 ♖b4 22. ♘xb6, and White wins a pawn. Therefore the a6-pawn has to be defended, but the return of the rook to a8 is an admission that Black has problems with his queenside development and it is not easy for him to coordinate his pieces. If 14... ♖b7 there can follow 15. 0–0 ♕e7 16. ♘d5! with enduring pressure on the queenside: 16... ♖c7 17. ♖d2 0–0 18. ♖c4 ♖d7 (not 18... ♖xc4? 19. ♖xc4 b5? because of 20. ♘a7) 19. ♖b3 ♖e6 20. ♖c4.

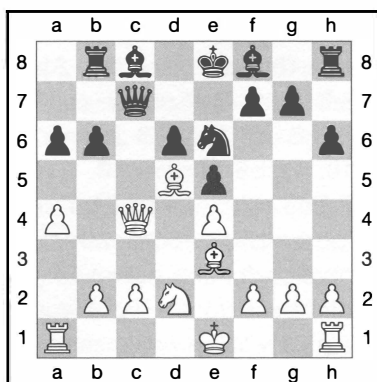
15. ♖d2 ♖e6

After 15... ♕e7 16. ♘d5 ♘b7 17. 0–0 0–0 18. ♖c4 ♘xd5 19. ♖xd5 ♖b8 20. ♖fd1 White has an obvious spatial advantage.

16. ♘d5 ♖b8

16... ♘b7 17. 0–0 ♘xd5 18. exd5 ♖c5 19. ♖c4 also favours White – he is threatening 20. b4.

17. ♖c4!





The move of a mature master! Since the majority of the black pieces are undeveloped, Carlsen exchanges the only active one – the queen, with the hope of converting his spatial advantage in the endgame.

17...♖c5?!

This attempt to avoid the exchange of queens leads by force to the loss of the exchange. But in the endgame too Black cannot hold out: 17...♚xc4 18. ♖xc4 ♖f4 (not 18...b5? 19. axb5 axb5 20. ♖a7) 19. 0–0–0! ♖d7 (19...♖xd5 20. ♖xd5 leads to the loss of a pawn) 20. ♖xf4 (20. ♖xb6 ♖g4 21. ♖d2 ♖xg2 22. a5 ♖xe3 23. fxex3 is also good) 20...exf4 21. e5! b5 (if 21...dxe5 there follows 22. ♖xe5 or 22. ♖xf7+) 22. ♖xd6+ ♖xd6 23. exd6, and Black cannot avoid loss of material.

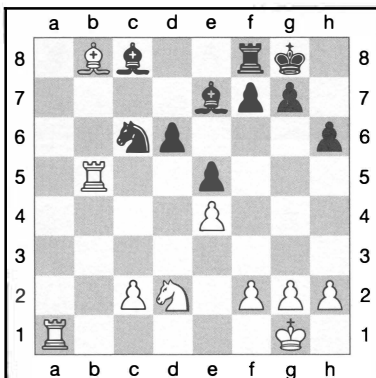
18. b4! b5 19. axb5 axb5 20. ♚c3 ♖e6 21. ♚xc7 ♖xc7 22. ♖a7 ♖xd5 23. ♖xb8 ♖xb4 24. 0–0!

Including the second rook in the attack on the queenside.

24...♖c6 25. ♖fb1 ♖e7

At last Black has managed to develop this bishop. In the event of 25...♖xb8 26. ♖a8 ♖c6 27. ♖xc8+ ♖d7 28. ♖a8 its release might lead to further losses.

26. ♖xb5 0–0



27. ♖c4!

Deep calculation! All Black's trickery leads merely to a reduction in the material.

27...♖e6 28. ♖xd6 ♖xc4 29. ♖c5! ♖c8

After 29...♖xd6 30. ♖xc6 the elegant fork proves decisive.

30. ♖xc4 ♖xd6 31. ♖a6 ♖b8

The alternative 31...♖e7 32. ♖xc8+ ♖xc8 33. ♖a8 is equally hopeless.

32. g3 ♖d4 33. ♖xd6 ♖b1+ 34. ♖g2 ♖b2 35. c3 ♖c2 36. ♖f1

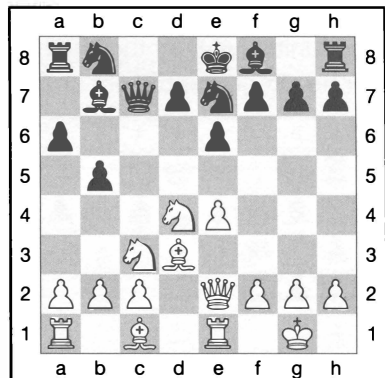
Black resigned.

Game 15

M. Carlsen – G. Kamsky

World Cup, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005
Sicilian Defence [B43]

1. e4 c5 2. ♖f3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♖xd4 a6 5. ♖c3 ♚c7 6. ♖d3 b5 7. 0–0 ♖b7 8. ♚e2 ♖e7 9. ♖e1



This novelty, apparently saved up for such an important game, best characterises Carlsen's understanding of the game, based on a knowledge of the classics.



Taking account of Black's retarded development, he prepares the knight thrust to d5. For this he needs to reinforce the pin on the e-file.

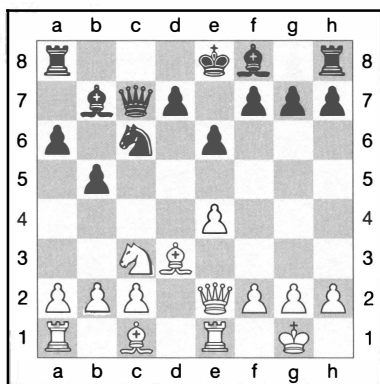
9...♖bc6

The natural way of developing. If 9...♖g6 all the same there follows 10. ♖d5! ♜d6 (10...exd5? 11. exd5+ ♖e7 12. ♖f5) 11. c4 (the aggressive 11. ♜h5 is justified after 11...exd5 12. exd5+ ♖d8 13. ♖g5+ ♖c7 14. c4 with an attack on the king, but Black can continue his development with 11...♖c6!?) 11...bxc4 12. ♖xc4 f6 (here too 12...exd5? 13. exd5+ ♖d8 14. ♜e8+ ♖c7 15. ♜xf7 ♜f6 16. ♖e6+ ♖b6 17. ♖e3+ is dangerous for Black; if 12...♖c6 there is the unpleasant 13. ♖f5) 13. ♖d2 ♖c6 with the idea of 14. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 15. ♜ad1 ♖b5.

If 9...g6 Black has to reckon with 10. ♖dxb5!? axb5 11. ♖xb5 ♜e5 12. ♖e3 ♖bc6 13. f4.

10. ♖xc6 ♖xc6

10...dxc6 was more circumspect. To judge by the game, Kamsky either underestimated White's initiative after the knight thrust to d5, or he altogether did not consider it.



11. ♖d5! exd5

The World Cup formula with a mini-match of two classical games raised the value of each of them. Therefore it is hard to condemn Kamsky for taking a risk. Otherwise he would have retreated with 11...♜d8.

12. exd5+ ♖e7 13. c4!

An important move for the understanding of this position. Since it is unreal for the black king to move to its own wing, White must prepare to meet it on the queenside.

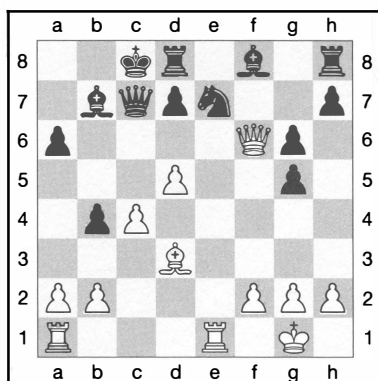
13...b4

Opening the position by 13...bxc4 14. ♖xc4 allows the white rook to join the attack along the c-file, and if 14...♜d6 Black has to reckon with 15. g3 followed by ♖f4.

14. ♖g5 f6

The alternative 14...♜c5 is parried by the seemingly modest offer to exchange the queens – 15. ♜e3 ♜xe3 16. ♜xe3 f6 (16...d6 17. ♖xe7 ♖xe7 18. ♜ae1) 17. d6 ♖f7 (17...fxg5 18. dxe7 ♖f7 19. ♜ae1 ♜e8 20. exf8 ♜+ ♖hx8 21. ♜xe8 ♜xe8 22. ♜xe8 ♖xe8 23. ♖xh7 leads to the loss of a pawn) 18. dxe7 ♖xe7 19. ♖f4 with the better end-game for White.

15. ♜h5+ g6 16. ♜f3 fxg5 17. ♜f6 0-0-0



**18. ♖xh8**

After the tempting 18. d6 there is 18... ♗g8! 19. ♖xh8 ♕xd6 and the initiative passes to Black. From the material point of view, the outcome of the opening operation is not wonderful for White. But as regards the assessment of the position, it has been an undoubted success: his pieces are dominant, whereas for the moment the black bishops are shut in.

18... ♗d6

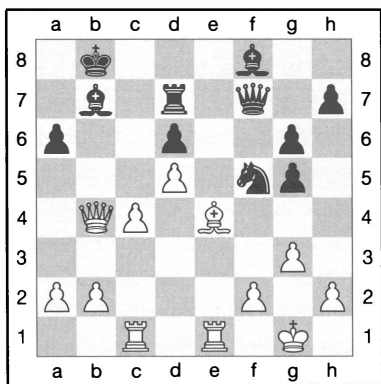
If 18...h6 there follows 19. ♖f6.

19. ♕e4

With the threat of c4–c5.

19... ♖b8 20. ♖ac1 ♖f4 21. g3 ♖f7**22. ♗d4**

22. ♖e5+ followed by ♖xg5 is also good enough, but Carlsen is hoping for more.

22...d6 23. ♖b6 ♖d7 24. ♖xb4 ♖f5**25. ♕xf5**

An amazingly pragmatic approach to the solution of the position. White exchanges the active knight in order to invade with his rook at e6, not paying any great importance to the undoubling of the black pawns.

25... ♖xf5

25... ♖xf5 loses to 26. ♖e8+ ♖a7 27. ♖a3! ♖c7 28. ♖e3+.

26. ♖e6 f4 27. ♖ce1 ♖d8 28. ♖b6 ♖c8 29. b4!

White's main threat involves the invasion of his rook at e8.

29...fxg3

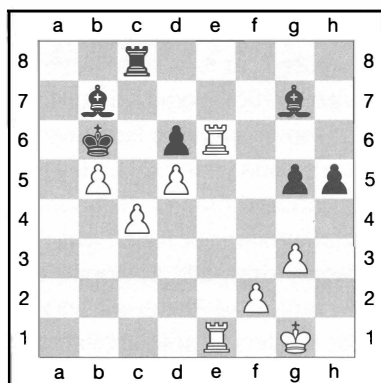
If 29... ♖xc4 there follows 30. b5 axb5 31. ♖e8+ ♖c8 32. ♖xb5 ♖xd5 33. ♖xc8+ ♖xc8 34. ♖e8+ ♖c7 35. ♖xd5 ♕xd5 36. ♖xf8, obtaining a technically won ending.

30. hxg3 h5 31. b5 ♖c7

Since Black cannot be satisfied with 31... axb5 32. ♖xb5 when there is no defence against 33. ♖e8, he is forced to agree to an endgame, where his bishops are still out of play.

32. ♖xc7+ ♖xc7 33. a4 axb5 34. axb5 ♖b6 35. ♖e8

35. ♖f6! is more forceful, when Black is practically in zugzwang.

35... ♕g7 36. ♖8e6

**36...♖d8?**

Black should have decided on 36...♖xc4 37. ♖xd6+ ♜c5 38. ♖g6 ♜c3 39. ♖d1 ♜xd5 40. ♖xg5 ♜d4 41. ♖xh5. It is not easy for him to escape from the pin, but the advance of the f- and g-pawn pair requires time, which gives him some practical saving chances.

37. c5+!

An unexpected thrust, leading to the win of one of the bishops.

37...♜xc5 38. ♖e7 ♜d4

38...♜c3 was more resilient: 39. ♖c7+ ♜b6 Black resigned.

40. ♖xc3 ♜xd5 41. ♖d1 ♜a8 42. ♖a3 d5 (after 42...♜xb5 White wins by 43. ♖da1 ♜c6 44. ♖a5+, while if 42...♜b7 there follows 43. ♖e3 and 44. ♖e6) 43. ♖da1 ♜b7 44. ♖e3 ♖d7 45. ♖e5 ♖g7 46. ♖b1, although here too White should be able to convert his exchange advantage.

39. ♖xb7 ♖f8 40. ♖c7+ ♜xd5 41. ♖d1!

The final subtlety. 42. b6 is threatened.

41...♖b8 42. ♖g7 g4 43. ♖g5+ ♜c4 44. ♖xh5 ♜c5 45. ♖g5 ♖xb5 46. ♖xg4+ ♜c3 47. ♜g2 ♜a3 48. ♖gd4

Qualifying for the Candidates series implies contacts with the world elite and the reaching of a new level of mastery. The chess world was expecting a great deal of Carlsen, but if you raise your potential in slow steps, you should remember that time does not work long for the young, and you can easily dissolve into the overall mass, as occurred with a number of his talented contemporaries. But to gain in class, it is important to make the next step. The step into chess high society. For the 15-year-old grandmaster a rating of 2570 on the results of 2005 gave every justification for this.

At that time the chess calendar offered two opportunities to progress. The first was to qualify for the main Wijk aan Zee tournament. Here there was no problem, as Magnus was a desired guest at the most famous festival of the year. Another way of breaking into elite society was offered by the well-known Dutch chess patron Joop van Oosterom, who sponsored not only his trademark 'Melody Amber' tournament, but also the 'Rising Stars' competition, where veterans tested talented young players, the best of whom would qualify for the main tournament. Carlsen made use of both opportunities.

In January 2006 he again, for the third year in a row, played in Wijk aan Zee. On this occasion the organisers had invited a stronger field for the B tournament compared with the previous year, raising it to FIDE category 15, where the brightest young talents were guaranteed places. But such rivalry was to the advantage of Magnus, who had rested and was eager for a fight. The battle for qualification to the A tournament was uncommonly dramatic. It appeared that on this occasion Magnus would more than hold his own: after 7 rounds he was confidently leading with 6 points, after gaining a number of wins in splendid attacking style. But he then slowed down with a series of draws, and in the 11th round he was caught by Alexander Motylev, who won their



individual encounter. It was these two who were victorious in the tournament, after overcoming the hurdle of the last round, where they had to defeat the lady players Kateryna Lahno and Humpy Koneru. True, even with a share of 1st–2nd places (9 points out of 13) there were still grounds for disappointment, since on the tie-break first prize went to Motylev. But the festival organisers reassured Carlsen, saying that they had decided to allow both players into the A tournament in 2007.

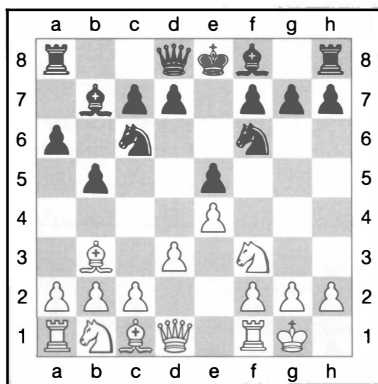
Game 16

M. Carlsen – A. Beliavsky

Wijk aan Zee B 2006

Ruy Lopez [C91]

1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♙c6 3. ♘b5 a6 4. ♙a4
 ♙f6 5. 0–0 b5 6. ♘b3 ♘b7 7. d3



This modest pawn move is a kind of anti-Arkhangelsk variation, directed against the active development of the bishop at c5, which is Black's main response to one of the basic continuations 7. ♖e1. Another such continuation is 7. c3, which was especially popular at the end of the 20th century. The greatest stir at that time was created by the game Nunn–Beliavsky (Amsterdam 1990), which continued 7...♙xe4 8. d4 ♙a5 9. ♙c2 exd4 10. b4 ♙c4 11. ♙xe4 ♙xe4 12. ♖e1 d5 13. ♙xd4 c5! 14. bxc5 ♙xc5 15. f3 0–0 16. fxe4 dxe4 17. ♙h1 ♖e8 18. ♙e3 ♙xe3 19. ♖xe3 b4, and Beliavsky won after a very sharp fight.

7...♙c5?!

Here this activity is inappropriate, since it allows White to develop his knight at c3, creating the threat of pinning the f6-knight (with the idea of ♙c3–d5), after which the absence of the bishop from e7 is very perceptible. The main continuation is 7...♙e7, as Beliavsky had played in all his preceding games. To the question, why did he play 7...♙c5, Alexander merely shrugged his shoulders.

8. ♙c3

For the moment the immediate pin 8. ♙g5 is premature, since after 8...h6 9. ♙h4 0–0 10. ♙c3 ♙e7! Black retreats his bishop, obtaining an easy game. Now, however, it is not easy for him to choose a moment to castle.

8...d6

A natural and frequently-employed move. But 8...0–0!? also comes into consideration, with the idea after 9. ♙g5 h6 10. ♙h4 ♙e7 of reaching a position from the variation given in the previous note.

9. a4

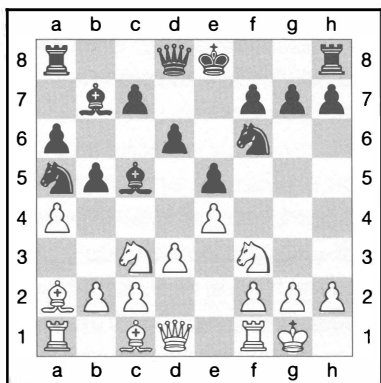
A standard flank attack, which at the same time solves the problem of retaining the light-square bishop. After the modest 9. ♙e3 0–0 10. a3 ♙d4 Black has no problems.

**9...♖a5**

A dubious move – the knight moves to the edge of the board. The main continuation is considered to be 9...b4. Since the time of the Kasparov–Anand world championship match in 1995 it has been considered that 10. ♖d5 leads to the exchange of this knight (10...♖a5 11. ♖xf6+ ♔xf6), which eases Black's defence: 12. ♖a2 h6 13. c3 bxc3 14. bxc3 0–0 15. ♖e3 ♖ad8 16. ♖b1 ♖c8 (with the idea of ...♖g4 or ...♖e6) with roughly equal chances. More complicated play results from 10. ♖e2 0–0, and if 11. a5!? (preventing ...♖a5), then 11...d5!? is possible.

10. ♖a2

No true 'Spanish' player would part with his trademark bishop for the sake of an extra, doubled pawn – 10. axb5 ♖xb3 11. cxb3 axb5 12. ♖xa8 ♖xa8 13. ♖xb5 h6, for which Black has sufficient compensation in the form of the two bishops.

**10...b4 11. ♖e2 ♖c8?!**

On the whole this is a thematic bishop manoeuvre, by which Black takes control of f5 (for where the knight is aiming) and gains the opportunity to neutralise the bishop on

a2 or effect a pin on g4. But in the given specific situation, for the moment this manoeuvre is premature. Black should have decided on 11...0–0!? 12. ♖g5 h6 13. ♖h4, when 13...♖c8! is now good.

12. c3

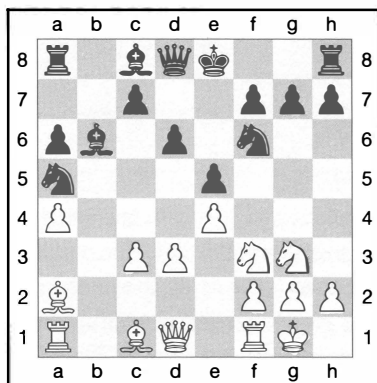
If 12. ♖e3 Black equalises by 12...♖xe3 13. fxe3 ♖e6!.

12...bxc3 13. bxc3 ♖b6

A prophylactic bishop retreat, since in the event of 13...♖e6 the 14. d4 advance is made with gain of tempo, and after 14...♖xa2 15. ♖xa2 ♖b6 16. ♖g5 White has an enduring advantage.

14. ♖g3

Now if 14. ♖g5 there can follow 14...h6 15. ♖h4 g5!? (15...0–0?! 16. ♖g3!) 16. ♖g3 0–0.

**14...♖e6?!**

Black decides against 14...0–0, fearing the pin 15. ♖g5. But perhaps the devil is not as terrible as he's painted? For example, the game De Firmian–Lugo (San Diego 2004) continued 15...h6 16. ♖h4 ♖g4 17. h3 ♖xf3 18. ♔xf3 g5 19. ♖f5 gxh4 20. ♖xh6+, and here, by playing 20...♖g7! 21. ♖f5+



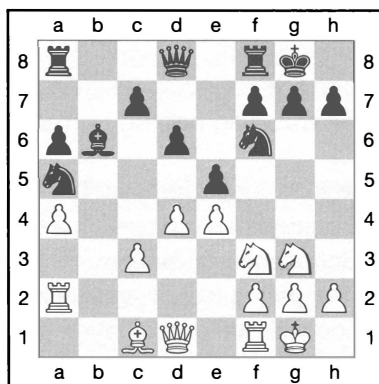
♔h8, Black would have held the position. Instead of 19. ♖f5 Viktor Mikhalevsky recommends 19. ♖h5! ♖xh5 20. ♗xh5, which is correct after 20...g×h4? 21. ♗g6+ ♔h8 22. ♗xh6+ ♔g8 23. ♔h1! with dangerous threats such as f2–f4. But 20...♗f6! 21. ♕g3 ♔g7 22. ♖ab1 ♗g6 is stronger, when Black successfully defends (Beliavsky).

15. d4! ♕xa2?!

If was not yet too late to castle – 15...0–0 16. d×e5 d×e5 17. ♖x5 ♗x5 18. ♖x5 ♖ad8 19. ♖e1 ♖fe8, and Black's active pieces give him quite good compensation for the pawn.

16. ♖xa2 0–0?!

Now White's attack becomes irresistible, but it is already hard to offer Black good advice. For example, he is unable to return the a5-knight to the defence – 16...♖c6 17. a5! ♖xa5 (17...♕xa5? 18. ♗a4 ♗d7 19. d5) 18. d×e5 d×e5 19. ♖d2 with numerous threats. The defence is also not eased by the inclusion of 16...exd4!? 17. cxd4 0–0 18. ♕g5 h6 19. ♕h4, when in view of the threat of ♖h5 White's attack is very dangerous. For example: 19...c5 20. ♖h5 g5 21. ♖xg5 ♖xh5 22. ♗xh5 h×g5 23. ♕xg5 f6 24. ♗g6+ ♔h8 25. ♖a3! or 19...♖e8 20. ♗c1 (with the threat of ♖h5) 20...♖b3 21. ♗e3 ♖xd4 22. ♖xd4 ♕xd4 23. ♗xd4 g5 24. f3! g×h4 25. ♖f5, and Black's position is destroyed (Mikhalevsky).



17. ♕g5!

White has been able to implement the main conceptual idea in the 7...♕c5 variation. The pin on the knight decides the game.

17...exd4

Things are not changed by 17...h6 18. ♕h4. Now 18...exd4 19. cxd4 leads to a position considered in the note to 16...0–0, while if 18...♖c6 there follows 19. ♖h5! g5 20. ♖xg5! ♖xh5 21. ♗xh5 h×g5 22. ♕xg5 f6 23. ♕h6, and after the capture of the rook White's attack remains dangerous.

18. ♖h5! d×c3 19. ♖h4!

White's attack is so strong, that he can demonstrate the strength of his cavalry. But also after the prosaic 19. ♕xf6 g×f6 20. ♗c1 ♔h8 21. ♗xc3 ♖g8 22. ♖xf6 Black would not have held out for long.

19...♔h8 20. ♖f5

Black resigned.

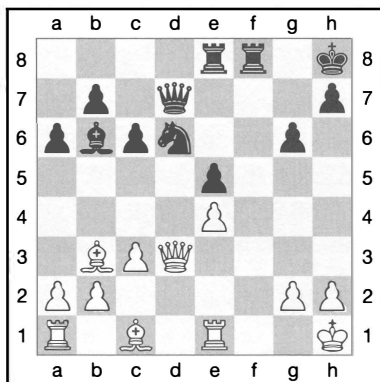
Some commentators gave an enthusiastic assessment of this game. This would seem to be a delusion. Beliavsky's play was a long way from his real potential, as indicated by the series of mediocre moves, beginning with his choice of opening variation. Knowing the main idea of White's play against 7...♕c5, it was not hard

for Magnus to find obvious moves. But he must be given his due – he carried out a sustained attack.

Carlsen encountered Beliavsky's real potential a few months later in Amsterdam, where he was also hoping to make use of the other opportunity to move into 'high society'.

In the summer of that year the Max Euwe Association, financed by Joop van Oostrom, organised in Amsterdam a team tournament 'Rising Stars' v. 'Experience', held on the Scheveningen system. Famous veterans tested promising young players. The best of the young would receive an invitation to the Melody Amber tournament, held in Monaco with the participation of the world elite. The composition of the junior team was imposing: the young grandmasters who had distinguished themselves in Wijk aan Zee – Sergey Karjakin, who had shared 5th–6th places in the A Tournament, and Magnus Carlsen, who had shared 1st–2nd places in the B Tournament, the home players Daniel Stellwagen and Jan Smeets, and the Chinese player Wang Hao. As for the five veterans, only the 53-year-old Alexander Beliavsky was still active in competitions. He became a strict examiner of the main favourites in the two concluding rounds: he defeated the leader Carlsen and did not allow Karjakin to catch him. As a result Carlsen and Beliavsky finished first in their respective teams with identical results – 6½ points from 10 games. For the second time Carlsen fulfilled his main objective – to break through to encounters with the elite in a minimum of two tournaments in 2007. As for the examination by the veteran, it was very instructive.

M. Carlsen – A. Beliavsky Amsterdam 2006



31...♖g4! 32. ♙e3

White cannot take the knight by 32. ♖xd6 on account of an attractive mate: 32...♗f2 33. ♗g1 ♖xg2+! 34. ♗xg2 ♗f1+ 35. ♗g1 ♗xg1#.

32...♙e3 33. ♖xe3 ♗f4

In a position which is difficult for the opponent it is logical to increase the pressure. Therefore Beliavsky is not in a rush to win a pawn – 33...♙xe4 34. ♗f1!? (34. ♗e2 ♙d6) 34...♙f6 35. ♗ae1, which allows White to activate his forces.

34. ♙d1

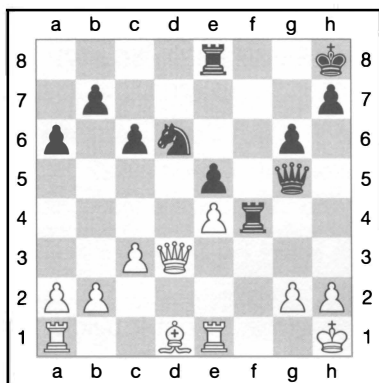
Magnus follows the path of least resistance. 34. ♙c2 was stronger: 34...♗ef8 35. ♖c5 ♗f2 36. ♖xe5+ ♗8f6 37. ♖g3 ♖xg3 38. hxg3 ♗xc2 39. e5 ♗e6 40. exd6 ♗xd6, and now not 41. ♗e8+?! ♙g7 42. ♗e7+ ♙h6 43. ♗xb7 ♗dd2, but immediately 41. ♗e7! ♗xb2 42. ♗f1, and the activity of the rooks secures equality. Therefore Black would apparently have had to regroup his forces



by 35...♖e6 36. ♖ad1 ♗f6 37. ♘g1 ♖f2, but after 38. ♙d3 White holds the position.

34...♗g5 35. ♗d3?

This allows a rook invasion, leading to the loss of a pawn without any compensation. 35. ♙f3!? ♗xe4 36. ♖ad1 was more resilient, although even here after 36...♗f6 followed by ...e5–e4 the extra pawn should have the final word.



35...♖f2 36. ♙f3 ♖d2 37. ♗f1

Also after the queen exchange 37. ♗e3 ♗xe3 38. ♖xe3 ♖xb2 the endgame is hopeless for White.

37...♖xb2 38. ♖ad1 ♖d8 39. c4?!

The cunning 39. ♙g4 (with the idea of ♖xd6) is parried by the cool-headed 39...♘g7.

39...♘g7

In time-trouble one wants to play as solidly as possible, but 39...♖xa2 was also possible, intending to meet 40. c5 with 40...♗b5 41. ♗c4 ♖ad2.

40. ♗d3 ♗f7 41. ♗a3 ♖dd2 42. ♖xd2

♗xd2 43. ♖d1 ♖xa2 44. ♗e7 ♗c3

45. h4

If 45. ♗xb7 or 45. ♖f1, then 45...♖a1 is also

decisive. Two pawns down, White played on for another ten moves before curtailing his hopeless resistance.

Game 17

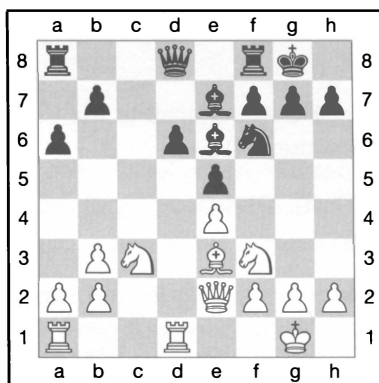
M. Carlsen – J. Nunn

Amsterdam 2006

Sicilian Defence [B90]

1. e4 c5 2. ♗f3 d6 3. d4 ♗f6 4. ♗c3 cxd4 5. ♗xd4 a6 6. ♙e3 e5 7. ♗f3 ♙e7 8. ♙c4 0–0 9. 0–0 ♙e6 10. ♙b3 ♗c6 11. ♗e2 ♗a5 12. ♖fd1 ♗xb3 13. cxb3!?

The main continuation 13. axb3 ♗c7 is considered to be sound enough for Black, and so Carlsen turns onto a less well-explored path, opening the c-file for his rook and preventing the development of the queen at c7.



13...♗e8

Two years later the game Carlsen–Ivanchuk (Morelia/Linares 2008) continued 13...♗d7 14. ♗d2 ♗c7 15. ♖ac1 ♖fc8 16. ♗d5 ♗d8 17. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 18. ♗xe7+ ♗xe7 19. ♗c4 ♙xc4 20. bxc4 ♗c5 21. b3 ♖c6 and Black maintained the balance. With the exchange of the dark-square bishop the d6-pawn is weakened, of course, but it proves impossible to approach it.

**14. ♖e1**

This move indicates that Carlsen is familiar with the theory even of this fairly rare variation. 14. ♔g5, attempting to exploit the weakness of the d5-point, is parried by 14...♖h5! (this possibility is based on tactics: 15. ♖xe5 is not possible because of 15...f6), played in the game Movsesian–Babula (Czech Team Championship 2005–6). After the exchange of Black's 'bad' bishop the chances are equal.

14...h6

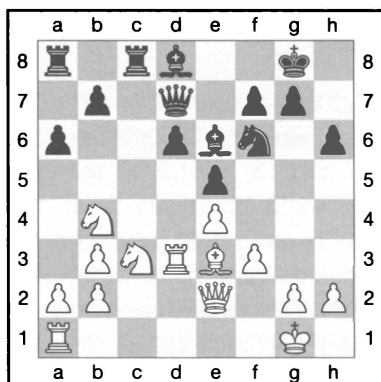
Later, at the rapid tournament in Cap d'Agde 2006, Karjakin played more energetically against Carlsen: 14...♖g4 15. ♖c2 f5 16. f3 ♖xe3 17. ♖xe3 fxe4 18. ♖xe4 ♖d8 19. ♖d5, and a position with equal chances was reached.

15. ♖c2

The knight is transferred to the key point of the position – d5.

15...♜d7 16. ♖b4 ♜fc8 17. f3 ♔d8**18. ♖d3**

By threatening the doubling of rooks on the d-file, White does not allow time for ...b7–b5.

**18...a5**

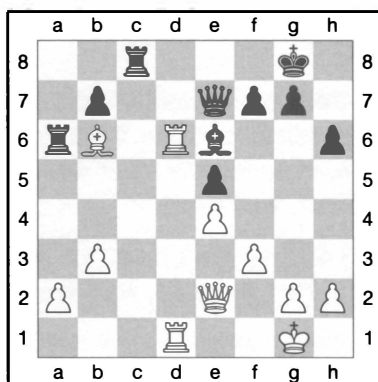
This weakening of the queenside squares by Black is associated with an incorrect idea. Possibly the experienced grandmaster was not attracted by the exchanging operation 18...♔a5 19. ♖bd5 ♖xd5 (or 19...♔xd5 20. ♖xd5 ♔d8 21. ♖ad1 ♖e8 22. ♖c3 ♖f6) 20. ♖xd5 ♔d8 (not 20...b5 21. ♔b6) 21. ♖ad1, leading to a passive position, which, however, is not easy to breach.

19. ♖bd5 ♖xd5 20. ♖xd5 a4?!

Illogical – why undouble the white pawns? 20...♖a6 21. ♖ad1 ♖ac6 was in the spirit of the position, with the idea of 22. ♖c3 ♔xd5. 20...b5 and 20...f5 were also possible.

21. ♖xa4 ♖xa4 22. b3 ♖a6 23. ♖ad1 ♖a5?

A strange move, to put it mildly, leading to the loss of a pawn. If Black was intending to exchange on d5, 23...♜b5 24. a4 ♜e8 25. ♖b4 ♖aa8 was more logical, at least provoking a weakening of the b3-pawn. 23...f5 came into consideration, with the threat of 24...fxe4 25. fxe4 ♔g4, while if 24. ♜f2? White has to reckon with 24...♔xd5 25. ♖xd5 f4.

24. ♖b6 ♔xb6 25. ♔xb6 ♖a6 26. ♖xd6 ♜e7



27. ♖b2!

Apparently when he played 23...♖a5 Black missed this possibility, hoping for 27. ♖d8+ ♖xd8 28. ♗xd8 ♖c5+ 29. ♕h1 ♖a3, when he regains the pawn (30. ♖d2? ♗xb3 31. axb3 ♖c1+ 32. ♖d1 ♖a1). Now, however, the queen is switched to its own wing, where it supports the advance of the pawns.

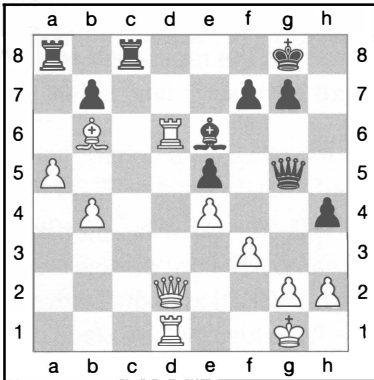
27...♖g5?!

Of course, 27...♖xb6? 28. ♖xb6 ♖c5+ 29. ♖f2 does not work, but Black should have reconciled himself to 27...♖aa8 28. a4 f6, since the attempt to develop counter-play on the kingside is unrealistic.

28. a4 h5 29. a5 h4 30. b4 ♖aa8

White has made progress with his attack on the queenside, whereas Black's play has come to a standstill, since after 30...h3 31. ♖d8+ ♖xd8 32. ♖xd8+ ♕h7 33. ♖d2 ♖xd2 (otherwise b4–b5) 34. ♖xd2 ♖a8 35. g4 he loses his h3-pawn.

31. ♖d2



31...♖xd2

Black is forced to agree to the exchange of queens, since otherwise after 31...♖h5 32. h3 the queen remains out of play, passively observing the breakthrough by the a-pawn: 32...♖g6 33. ♖c1 ♖xc1+ 34. ♖xc1 ♖c8 35. ♖d2 (also good is 35. ♖xc8+ ♗xc8 36. ♖xg6 fxg6 37. b5 ♕f7 38. ♗c7 ♕e6 39. ♕f2, when the march of the king to the queenside leads to the winning of the e5- and h4-pawns) 35...♖c4 36. ♗e3 ♕h7 37. ♖b6, winning the b6-pawn.

32. ♖1xd2 ♖c4 33. ♗c5 ♖c8 34. ♖b6 ♖c7 35. ♕f2 ♕h7 36. ♗d6 ♖d7

36...♖c2 37. ♕e1 ♖c1+ 38. ♖d1 leads to the exchange of a pair of rooks and the loss of the e5-pawn.

37. ♕e3 f6

Parting with the e5-pawn, but also hopeless is 37...♖c3+ 38. ♖d3 ♖xd3+ 39. ♕xd3 f6 40. ♕c3, when White creates a passed pawn.

38. ♗xe5 fxe5 39. ♖xe6 ♖xd2 40. ♕xd2 ♖xb4 41. ♖xe5 ♖b2+ 42. ♕c3 ♖xg2 43. ♖h5+ ♕g6 44. ♖xh4 ♖a2 45. ♕b4

Black resigned.

After his notable performance in the World Cup, Carlsen was also guaranteed invitations to the major all-play-all tournaments. Nevertheless, he couldn't refrain from a trip to Reykjavik to take part in the traditional Open. Magnus was leading up to the last round, but he contrived to lose a better endgame to the Egyptian Adly, whose rating was 150 points lower than his. The result was a share of 6th–9th places with a score of



6½ points out of 9. A more serious test awaited him at a FIDE category 17 tournament in Sarajevo with a well-balanced young field of six participants. In the absence of any obvious outsiders, the tournament concluded with a unique result: '+1' was sufficient for a share of first place. Carlsen gained his only win with Black against the Bosnian Borki Predojevic, and for clear victory in the tournament he needed to do the same in the last round with White, but he played on to a difficult endgame, which he saved only by a miracle. The result was a share of 1st–3rd places with Nisipeanu and Malakhov (5½ points from 10 games).

Part of the 'compulsory' program for 2006 was the Olympiad in Turin. Although Norway does not number among the 'chess' countries and the team faced matches in the second echelon, Magnus showed himself to be a genuine leader. On board 1 he scored 6 points in 8 games, which enabled the Norwegian team to finish in an honourable 31st place.

Carlsen's star status did not affect his patriotic sense, and he thought that he should also play in the Norwegian Championship. This stroll in an easy tournament (FIDE category 9) proved in fact to be quite difficult – a share of 1st–2nd places with his first mentor, Agdestein (7 points out of 9). The match for the title of champion was won 3–1 by the pupil.

The tournament in Biel, held with the same format as in the previous year, attracted an even stronger field (FIDE category 17), with the participation of the winners of the preceding tournaments, Alexander Morozevich (2003 and 2004) and Andrey Volokitin (2005). It was the games with them that determined Carlsen's result. He achieved the impossible – he won twice against Morozevich, but he also lost twice to Volokitin. As for Morozevich, on this occasion too he was irrepressible and he again won 'Biel' by a margin of 1½ points from Carlsen and Radjabov, who shared 2nd–3rd places with 6 points out of 10.

Standing apart in the series of strong tournaments was the rapid-play event in the French town of Cap D'Agde (FIDE category 14), where in his semi-final match Carlsen lost ½–1½ to Karjakin.

Game 18

M. Carlsen – M. Adams

Olympiad, Turin 2006

Nimzo-Indian Defence [E20]

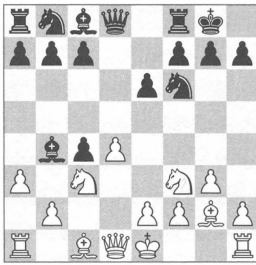
1. ♖f3 ♗f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♖c3 ♗b4 4. g3
0–0 5. ♗g2 d5 6. d4

Since the 14th world champion Vladimir Kramnik introduced the Catalan Opening into his repertoire, interest in positions of this type has greatly increased. This theme was taken up by Carlsen, who is also not

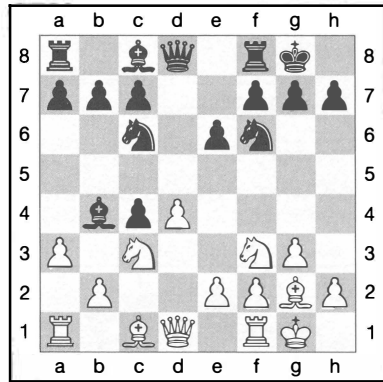
averse to playing with a fianchettoed bishop. This same position can also arise in the Romanishin Variation of the Nimzo-Indian Defence. Its virtues include piece pressure on the centre, and its drawbacks – the vulnerability of the c4-pawn, which is not the case in the Catalan Opening.

6...dxc4 7. 0–0

First clarifying the bishop's position by 7. a3!? also comes into consideration.



Analysis diagram



a) 7...♙xc3+ 8. bxc3 and after the attempt to defend the c4-pawn – 8...c6 (if 8...b5, then 9. a4! is good, taking play along similar lines) there can follow 9. ♖e5! ♖d5 10. ♗c2 b5 11. e4 ♘f6 12. a4 ♙b7 13. ♙a3 ♗e8 14. ♙b1! with the threat of 15. ♖xc4. 8...♘bd7 is more cautious, after which White carries out a plan typical of such positions: 9. 0–0 c6 10. a4 b5 11. ♙a3 ♗e8 12. ♘d2 ♘d5 13. ♗c2 ♙b7 14. ♖e4;

b) 7...♙e7 8. ♗a4 a6 9. ♗xc4 b5 10. ♗d3 ♙b7 11. ♙g5 ♘bd7 12. b4 a5!? 13. 0–0 axb4 14. axb4 ♙xb4 15. ♘xb5 c5 16. dxc5 ♗xa1 17. ♗xa1 ♙xc5 with an equal game (Radjabov–Topalov, Sofia 2008).

7...♘c6

Black is preparing an attack on the centre by ...e6–e5. The alternative is the undermining move 7...c5. Therefore it is more accurate to clarify the bishop's position on the 7th move.

8. a3

(see next diagram)

8...♙xc3

Playing this position with Black, Carlsen tried retreating his bishop – 8...♙a5 9. e3 e5 10. ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11. dxe5 ♗xd1 12. ♗xd1 ♘d7 13. f4 ♘c5 and he equalised in Pedersen–Carlsen (Aalborg 2006).

If 8...♙e7 White concentrates his forces in the centre: 9. e4 ♘a5 10. ♙e3 a6 11. ♗e2 b5 12. ♗ad1, threatening to launch an offensive. Noteworthy, for example, is the game Matlakov–Emelin (St. Petersburg 2009): 12...♙b7 13. ♘g5 ♘d7 14. h4 ♗e8 15. f4 ♘b3 16. e5 ♙xg2 17. ♙xg2 h6 18. d5! ♘dc5 (White also has a dangerous attack after 18...hxg5 19. hxg5 g6 20. ♗g4 ♙g7 21. ♘e4 ♗h8 22. ♘f6) 19. ♗g4 ♗d8 20. f5 exf5 21. ♗xf5 g6 22. ♘ge4 ♙h7 23. ♗f4 1–0.

9. bxc3 ♗b8 10. ♙g5 b5

After the inclusion of 10...h6 11. ♙h4 the continuation 11...b5 12. e4 e5 leads to a transposition of moves. The dangers of winning the bishop – 11...g5 12. ♘xg5 hxg5 13. ♙xg5 are well demonstrated by the game Ivanisevic–Mas (Biel 2008): 13...♙g7 14. e4 ♘e7 15. f4 ♘h7 16. ♗h5 ♘xg5 17. fxg5 e5 18. ♗f6 ♘g8 19. ♗af1 ♗e7 20. ♗h4 ♗d8 21. ♗h5 ♗e7 22. dxe5 ♙e6 23. g6 ♘h6 24. gx7 ♗h8 25. f8♗+ 1–0.

11. e4

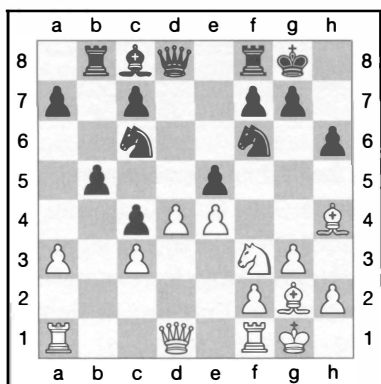
Carlsen considers a more effective way of exploiting the pin on the knight to be 11. ♘d2!? ♙b7 (after 11...♘e7 12. ♙xf6 gx6 13. ♘e4 the weakness of the c5-square is



disclosed) 12. ♖e4 ♖a5 13. ♖xf6+ gxf6 14. ♗h6.

11...h6 12. ♗h4 e5

12...g5?! is risky: 13. ♖xg5 hxg5 14. ♗xg5 e5 15. d5 with a dangerous attack for White.



13. ♖xe5!

For Magnus, who is noted for his concrete thinking, there is no reason to avoid an endgame where he has a spatial advantage and the two bishops. Nothing significant is promised by 13. d5 ♖a5 – after 14. a4 there can follow 14...g5 15. ♖xg5 hxg5 16. ♗xg5 ♗d6, and the pin does not succeed.

13...♖xe5 14. dxe5 ♗xd1 15. ♗fxd1 ♖d7

If 15...♖g4 Carlsen was intending 16. ♗d8 ♗b7 17. f4 ♖e3 18. ♗d2 ♖xg2 19. ♖xg2, when White gains an enduring advantage thanks to his control of the d-file.

16. f4

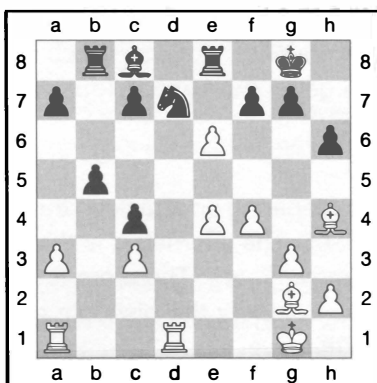
Black's position is unenviable: the rook on d1 severs his defensive resources in two, and the bishop pair is ready to begin operating at full power.

16...♗e8?!

Played on general grounds: Black prevents the transference of the bishop to the queenside. Annotating the game in *Informator*, Adams suggests a more promising way to resist: 16...♖xe5! 17. ♗e7! ♗e8 18. fxe5 ♗xe7 19. ♗d8+ ♖h7 20. ♗h3 ♗xh3 21. ♗xb8 ♗xe5 22. ♗b7! ♗xe4. Despite the exchange advantage, the weakening of White's periphery allows Black to initiate counterplay, for example: 23. ♗xb5 ♗e2 24. ♗c5 ♗g2+ 25. ♖h1 ♗c2 26. ♗xc4 ♗g2+ 27. ♖g1 c6 28. ♗a4 ♗d5 29. ♗xa7 ♗g2+ 30. ♖f1 ♗xh2 31. ♗e1 ♖g6 or 23. ♖f2 ♗e5 24. ♗xc7 ♗f5+ 25. ♖e3 a6, and White has nothing real.

17. e6!

A brilliant positional pawn sacrifice for the sake of including the g2-bishop in the game.



17...fxe6

As though bewitched, Adams calculated the consequences of capturing the pawn and decided on the move in the game. The capture with the rook 17...♗xe6 did not appeal to him because of 18. e5 g5 19. fxe5 ♖xe5 20. ♗d8+ ♖g7 21. gxe6+



♖xh6 22. ♖e1! ♖e6 23. ♖e3, and now if 23...♟d3? there follows 24. ♖xe6 fxe6 when Black cannot disentangle himself. *Rybka*, which does not suffer from illusions, defends by 23...f6!? 24. ♟d5 ♖eb6 25. ♖g8+ ♔h6, and although the king's position looks suspicious, it cannot be captured. However, 18. ♟d8! is more cunning (to judge by the game, Carlsen had this move in mind): 18...c6 19. e5 with the threat of 20. ♟h3.

But it is not essential to take the pawn! It is surprising, but in their commentaries on the game neither Adams nor Carlsen even considered 17...♟c5! 18. exf7+ ♔xf7 19. e5 ♟b7, when Black safely completes his development.

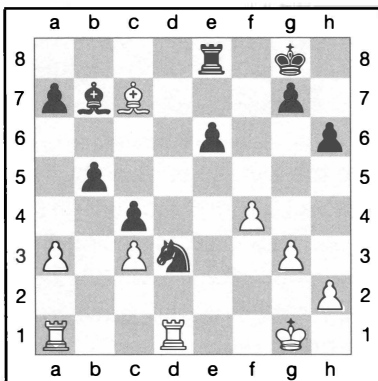
18. e5 ♟xe5

The only possible way of offering at least some resistance. 18...g5 is dubious: 19. fxg5 ♟xe5 20. gxh6 ♟b7 21. ♟f6 ♟d3 22. g4, and the passed pawns are bound to decide the game.

19. ♟d8!

An excellent intermediate move! Black, under the cross-fire of the bishops, is forced to give up the exchange.

19...♟d3 20. ♟xc7 ♖b7 21. ♟xb7 ♟xb7



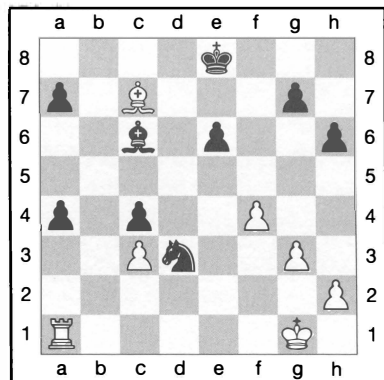
22. a4!

Carlsen's play in this endgame is admirable. Depth is combined with concrete decision-taking. It is well known that the side who is the exchange ahead should aim for the exchange of the opponent's rook, to deprive him of counterplay. The young Norwegian is prepared to sacrifice a pawn to achieve this objective.

22...bxa4 23. ♖db1 ♟c6 24. ♖b8 ♔f7

Black could have prevented the invasion of the rook by playing 24...♖xb8 25. ♟xb8 a6 26. ♟d6 ♔f7 27. ♖b1 ♟b5, but not for long. After 28. ♔g2 ♔f6 29. ♔f3 h5 30. ♔e4 White advances his kingside pawns, and after the opening of one of the files the rook penetrates into the rear.

25. ♖xe8 ♔xe8



26. ♟d6

The game enters the technical phase. First the path of the a4-pawn must be blocked.

26...a6 27. ♖b1 h5?!

Illogical. If possible, the invasion of the rook should be prevented – 27...♟b5. However, after 28. ♔g2 h5 29. ♔f3 ♔f7 30. ♔e4 White would have obtained the position considered in the note to Black's 24th move. Now Black loses a pawn.

28. ♖b6 ♔d7



If 28...♙b5 there follows 29. ♖b7 ♙d7 30. ♖a7.

29. ♙f8 g6 30. ♖xa6

Black has a pawn for the exchange, and in addition it is passed. But this does not change the evaluation of the ending: White should win, although it will be a lengthy process.

30...e5 31. fxe5 ♜xe5 32. h4 ♜g4

The c3-pawn is immune: 32...♜f3+ 33. ♙f2 ♜d2 34. ♙e3 ♜e4? 35. ♖xc6.

33. ♙g7 ♙c7 34. ♙d4

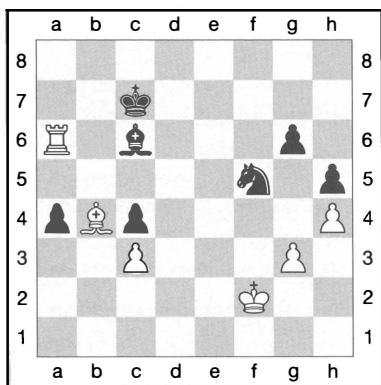
The bishop has handed over control of the a4-pawn to the rook, but it is performing an important role by preventing the manoeuvre of the knight to e4. The knight must find another way of tying the king to the defence of the g3-pawn, since against passive defence it will head towards the a4-pawn.

34...♜h6 35. ♙f2 ♜f5 36. ♙c5 ♙d7

37. ♙b4

'The Moor has done his duty, let him go!' The rook is freed to go in pursuit of the pawns.

37...♙c7



38. ♖a7+

38. ♖a5! was stronger: 38...♙b6 39. ♖c5 ♜d6 40. ♙e3 ♜b5 (in the event of 40...♙c7 41. ♙f4 ♙b6 42. ♖g5 the g6-pawn is lost) 41. ♖xc4 a3 42. ♙c5+ ♙c7 43. ♖a4 ♜xc3 44. ♖xa3 and White wins the pawn.

38...♙b6 39. ♖f7 ♜h6 40. ♖e7 ♙d5

Adams defends resourcefully, doing everything possible to prevent the white king from crossing the 3rd rank. But Carlsen finds a subtle rook manoeuvre, which destabilises the defence.

41. ♖d7! ♜g4+ 42. ♙e2 ♙e4 43. ♖d4!

♙d3+ 44. ♙f3 ♜h2+ 45. ♙f4 ♜f1

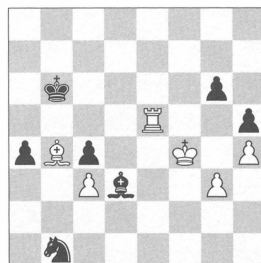
46. ♖d6+ ♙b5 47. ♖d5+ ♙b6 48. ♖a5

♙c2 49. ♖e5 ♙d3 50. ♙f3

50. g4!? h×g4 51. ♙×g4 was stronger, not allowing Black the chance which occurred in the game.

50...♜d2+ 51. ♙f4 ♜f1?

Adams misses the opportunity to advance his pawn to a3 – 51...♜b1!, with chances of holding the new defensive line.



Analysis diagram

Here are the variations given by Adams:

a) 52. ♖a5 a3 53. ♙g5 ♙c2 54. g4 (54. ♖a8 ♙b7 55. ♖a5 ♙b6, pursuing the rook) 54...h×g4 55. ♙×g4 ♙b3 56. ♙g5 ♙c2, and by reducing the pawn material, Black holds on;

b) 52. ♙e3! a3 53. ♖a5 ♙c2 54. ♙d4 ♙b3 followed by 55...a2.



But White's play can be improved. In variation b) instead of 53. ♖a5 he can win the c4-pawn – 53. ♔d4! ♕c2 (53... ♖b7 54. ♖a5 ♖b6 55. ♖a4! ♕c2 56. ♕c5+ ♖c6 57. ♖a6+! ♖b7 58. ♖a5) 54. ♕c5+! (of course, not 54. ♖xc4?? ♔d2+ and the pawn cannot be stopped) 54... ♖c6 55. ♖xc4. To convert the passed c3-pawn White must lift the blockade of the c4-square, which Black can set up by 55... ♔d2+ 56. ♖b4 a2 57. ♖e6+ ♔d5 58. ♖a6 ♖b1. This is achieved by the manoeuvre of the bishop to b2 – 59. ♖a3! ♔c4 60. ♖a8 ♔d2 61. ♕e3 ♔c4 62. ♕g5 ♔e5 63. ♖b3 ♔c4 64. ♕c1 ♖c5 (64... ♔d6 65. ♖a5+) 65. ♖a4 ♖b5 66. ♖b4+ ♖a5 67. ♖b2, and the c-pawn begins advancing.

Of course, under the strict time control it was impossible to calculate all these subtleties, but this was Adams' only chance of saving the game.

52. g4

There is no other way of breaching Black's defences.

52...h×g4 53. ♖×g4 ♔d2 54. ♖f4 ♔b3?

And here the only saving chance was 54... ♔b1!, with the hope of exchanging the a-pawn for the h4-pawn. However, as Adams shows in his analysis, after White's best continuation 55. ♕e3! he would have retained winning chances.



Analysis diagram

a) 55... a3 56. ♔d4 ♕c2 (the attempt to attack the h4-pawn after 56... ♔d2 leads to the temporary removal of the knight to the edge of the board, which allows White to pick up the a3-pawn and launch an attack on the king: 57. ♖e6+ ♖b5 58. ♖xa3 ♔f3+ 59. ♔d5 ♔xh4 60. ♕c5 ♔f3 61. ♖b6+ ♖a5 62. ♖b4 or 57... ♖b7 58. ♖xa3 ♔f3+ 59. ♖c5 ♔xh4 60. ♖e7+) 57. ♕c5+! ♖c6 58. ♖xc4 ♔d2+ 59. ♖b4 a2 60. ♖e6+ ♔d5 61. ♖a6 ♖b1 62. ♕e3 ♔c4. Although Black has set up a blockade on c4, it is not difficult to lift it: 63. ♔d4 ♔d6 64. ♖a5+ ♖e4 65. ♕f6 ♖d3 66. ♖a3 ♔c4 67. ♖a8 ♔e3 68. c4, and the pawn begins advancing;

b) 55... ♖b7 56. ♖a5 a3 57. ♔d4 ♔d2 58. ♔d5 (58. ♖xa3 leads to the loss of the h4-pawn: 58... ♔f3+ 59. ♔d5 ♔xh4 60. ♕c5 ♔f5 61. ♖a7+ ♖c8) 58... ♔b1 59. ♖b5+ ♖c8 60. ♔d4 ♔d2 61. ♖e3 ♔f1+ 62. ♖f2 ♔d2 63. ♖a5 ♔b1 64. ♖e3 ♖b7 65. ♔d4 ♔d2 66. ♔d5 ♔b1. In this position, although White has retained an advantage, Black has more chances of holding the position, having in mind an attack on the h4-pawn.

55. ♖e6+

The knight on b3 is essentially out of play and it is easier to attack the pawn on a4 than on a2, as was examined in the note to Black's 51st move.

55... ♖b5

The a4-pawn is also not saved by 55... ♖b7 56. ♖e5 ♔d2 57. ♔d5 ♔f3 (or 57... ♔b1 58. ♖e7+ ♖b6 59. ♕c5+ ♖b5 60. ♖b7+ ♖a6 61. ♖a7+ ♖b5 62. ♖b4) 58. ♖e7+ ♖b6 59. ♕c5+ ♖b5 60. ♖b7+ ♖a6 61. ♖a7+ ♖b5 62. ♕e7 ♔d2 63. ♔d8 and the inevitable ♖a5+ (Adams).

**56. ♖e8 ♜c1**

The position cannot be held by 56...♗b6 57. ♖a8 ♗b5 58. ♗e5 ♙c2 59. ♗d5 ♙d3 60. ♖b8+ ♗a6 61. ♗c6 ♙e4+ 62. ♗c7, when Black is in zugzwang (Adams).

57. ♖b8+ ♗c6 58. ♖a8 ♜e2+ 59. ♗f3 ♜g1+ 60. ♗e3 ♜e2 61. ♖xa4

The titanic work has nevertheless concluded with the win of the pawn. Now White can permit himself to switch to an attack on the g6-pawn.

61...♗d5 62. ♖a5+ ♗e6 63. ♖a2 ♜g3 64. ♗f4 ♜f5 65. ♖a6+ ♗f7 66. ♗g5 ♜g3 67. ♖a7+ ♗g8 68. ♗f6 ♜h5+ 69. ♗e5 ♜g3 70. ♙c5 ♜f5 71. ♙f2!

After the knight's manoeuvrability has been restricted, the game quickly concludes.

71...♜h6 72. ♙d4 ♜f5 73. ♗f6

Black resigned.

Game 19

M. Carlsen – A. Morozevich

Biel 2006

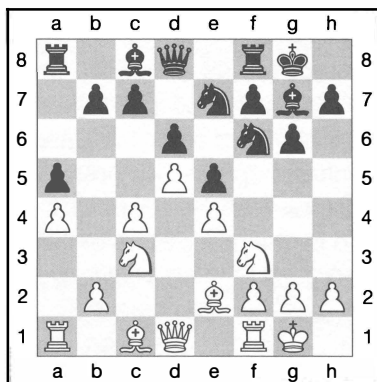
King's Indian Defence [E97]

1. d4 ♜f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♜c3 ♙g7 4. e4 d6 5. ♜f3 0–0 6. ♙e2 e5 7. 0–0 ♜c6 8. d5 ♜e7 9. a4

A rare continuation in the classical variation of the King's Indian Defence, which used to be practised in the late 1980s. Nowadays it is considered that White's main plan involves the preparation of c4–c5, which can be begun with an immediate 9. b4 or after the preparatory moves 9. ♜e1, 9. ♜d2 or 9. ♙d2.

9...a5

It was because of this reply, fixing the b4-square, that the move 9. a4 went out of use. This makes it all the more interesting – what has Carlsen prepared?

**10. b3!**

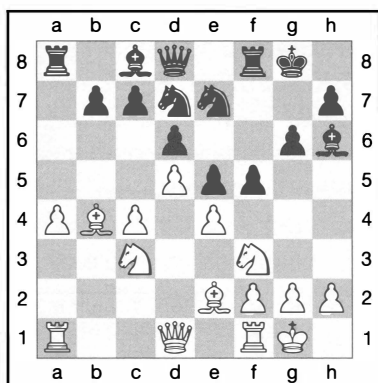
Here it is! To support the move b4 White brings out his bishop to a3. This is a fresh idea in the given position – the knight remains at f3, in order in the event of ... f7–f5 to proceed via g5 to e6. It should be mentioned that the first serious test of this variation occurred in the World Cup in the game Korchnoi–Kasparov (Barcelona 1989), which continued 10. ♜e1 ♜d7 11. ♙e3 f5 12. f3 ♜c5! 13. ♜d3 b6 14. b4! ♜xd3! 15. ♖xd3 axb4 16. ♜b5 ♗h8 17. ♖b3 ♜g8 18. ♖xb4, and here, as Kasparov shows, Black would have gained an advantage by 18...fxe4! 19. fxe4 ♖xf1+ 20. ♖xf1 ♙h6! 21. ♙f2 ♜f6!.

10...♜d7 11. ♙a3 ♙h6

Of course, 11...f5?! 12. ♜g5! ♜f6 13. c5! h6 14. cxd6 cxd6 15. ♜e6 ♙xe6 16. dxe6 would have been too big a concession to White. Apart from the spike-pawn on e6, which cramps Black, his own pawn on d6 needs defending.



12. b4 axb4 13. ♖xb4 f5



Here we can take stock of White's opening idea. Compared with the 9. b4 variation, he is as though a tempo down, since his pawn has gone to b4 in two moves, which, however, is not of great importance. The main ideas of this position are well known: White prepares c4–c5, and Black, while trying to prevent this, ties down the white pieces by the reinforcement of the f5–e4 pawn tension, not hurrying with the exchange. As for the plan of advancing the kingside pawns in connection with ...f5–f4, in the given situation (with the bishop on h6) it is unfounded, since White gets in first with his attack on the queenside. In this respect it is useful to be familiar with van Wely's games with Ivanchuk (Wijk aan Zee 1999) and Piket (Monaco 1997).

14. ♖d2

A typical manoeuvre. Since the knight's route to g5 is blocked, it defends the e4-pawn and is ready from b3 to support the c4–c5 advance.

14...♔h8

Also a typical manoeuvre in this type of position. The king moves off the a2–g8 diagonal in good time (which is useful in the

event of c4–c5) and vacates the g8-square for the knight, which at e7 is too passively placed. From here the knight can be played to f6, supporting the attack on the e4-pawn.

15. a5 ♖f7

For the moment there is nothing new. White continues seizing space, while Black strengthens his queenside defences and is not in a hurry to remove the support of the f5-pawn.

16. ♖b5

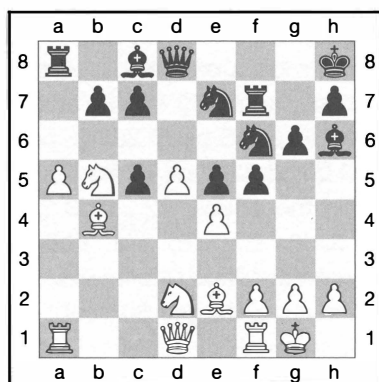
Carlsen is true to his aggressive style. He presses on the queenside, displaying his readiness to sacrifice the e4-pawn and hoping to use his pieces on the adjacent a2–g8 and a1–h8 diagonals.

16...♖f6

Black accepts the challenge. The position demands concrete decisions, and Morozevich thinks that the manoeuvre of his other knight to f6 via g8 is too slow, since he has to reckon with 17. exf5 gxf5 18. ♖c2 when he again faces a dilemma – how to operate with his knights.

17. c5 dxc5

After 17...♖xd2 18. ♖xd2 ♖xe4 White had prepared 19. ♖a2! dxc5 20. d6, attacking rook and knight.



**18. ♖c3**

Outwardly a thematic move: by capturing the e5-pawn, the bishop puts the black king under an 'X-ray' attack. But in the given situation this is going too far. Carlsen commits a mistake, typical of youth: he fails to reckon with the opponent's counterplay. There was no point in rejecting 18. ♖xc5, since after 18... ♖xd2 19. ♖xd2 ♖xe4 20. ♖b2! Black has no way of opposing White's attack on the long diagonal: 20... ♖xc5 21. ♖xe5+ ♖g8 22. ♖xc7. Now in the event of 22... ♖d7 23. ♖c3 ♖a7 24. ♖fd1 ♖f6 25. d6 ♖c6 26. ♖c4 White realises the attacking conception begun with 16. ♖b5 – his pieces dominate on the a2–g8 and a1–h8 diagonals. There only remains 22... ♖b8, but after 23. ♖e6! (this is stronger than 23. d6 ♖e4) White forcibly transposes into a favourable endgame: 23... ♖xd5 24. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 25. ♖xc5 ♖c7 26. ♖fc1 ♖f4 27. ♖f1.

18...c6!

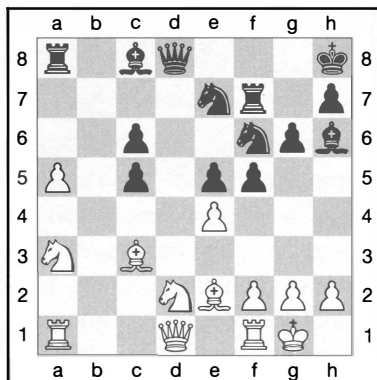
This way, without a moment's respite! In the event of 18... ♖xd2 19. ♖xd2 ♖xe4 20. ♖xe5+ ♖g8 21. ♖b2 White would have achieved his aim.

19. dxc6?!

Carlsen beats a retreat, relying only on the positional pluses associated with the knight's post on the c4 blockading square. And wrongly so! By the piece sacrifice 19. ♖xe5 cxb5 20. ♖xb5 ♖xa5 21. ♖xa5 ♖xa5 22. ♖c4 White could have continued the attack: 22... ♖d8 23. ♖d6 ♖f8 24. ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 25. ♖a1 ♖f8 26. e5, regaining the sacrificed material and retaining the initiative (Sergey Shipov).

19...bxc6?!

An anti-positional move – the doubled c-pawns are no adornment to Black's position. The natural 19... ♖xc6! suggested itself: 20. ♖c4 ♖d7! 21. ♖c2 ♖xe4 22. ♖b6 ♖b8 23. ♖xd7 ♖xd7, and after ... ♖d4 Black has more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed exchange.

20. ♖a3**20...fxe4**

The attempt to win this pawn with the knight after 20... ♖xd2 would have been parried by the intermediate move 21. ♖c4! (after 21. ♖xd2?! ♖xe4 22. ♖c3 ♖c7 23. ♖b2 ♖d5 24. ♖c4 ♖e7 25. f4 ♖a6 26. ♖xe5 ♖g8 the black knights dominate in the centre of the board) 21... ♖xe4 22. ♖xe5+ ♖g8 23. f3, and White regains the piece, retaining all the pluses of his position. As Viktor Mikhalevsky has shown, Black would have had to go in for a forcing variation: 23... ♖d5! 24. fxe4 ♖e3+ 25. ♖xe3 ♖xe5 26. ♖g4! f×g4 27. ♖d8+ ♖g7 28. ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 29. ♖f1+ ♖f5 30. ♖c4+ ♖g7 31. ♖g8+ ♖h6 32. exf5 g×f5 33. ♖h1!?, where the doubled extra pawns are of no importance, but White's initiative remains. After the inclusion of 33. ♖f8+ ♖g5 34. ♖h1 Black can sacrifice the exchange – 34... ♖a6!



35. ♖xa8 ♙xc4 36. ♖g1 ♙d5 with the threat of forcing a draw by perpetual check after ...♙xg2+.

21. ♖ac4! ♖ed5 22. ♙xe5 ♙g7

23. ♖d6

An illogical, reckless move, depriving the position of its strategic clarity for which Carlsen was aiming. He should have considered 23. ♖a4 e3 (23...♖d7 24. ♖a3 ♖e7 25. ♙d6 favours White) 24. fxe3 ♖xe3 25. ♖f2, and after the inevitable exchange of a pair of knights White controls the most important points on the board.

23...♖e7 24. ♖2c4 ♙e6?

This routine central play allows White to advance his passed pawn. 24...♙a6!, keeping the white pieces under pressure, was more logical.

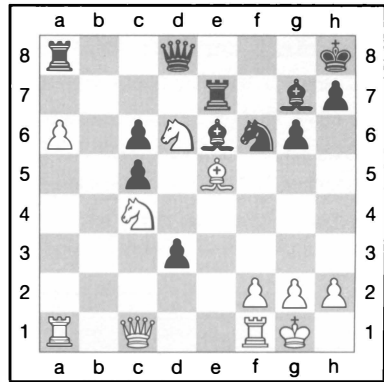
25. a6! ♖b4 26. ♖c1

26. ♖b1!? (with the threat of ♖b7) came into consideration: 26...♖g8 (both 26...♖xa6 27. ♖b6 and 26...♖xa6 27. ♖xa6 ♖xa6 28. ♖a1 are unfavourable for Black) 27. ♖b6 ♖aa7 and now 28. ♖c1 gains in strength. For example, if 28...♖d3 there is 29. ♙xd3 exd3 30. ♖xc5.

26...♖d3?!

Understandably, Morozevich did not like 26...♖xa6 27. ♖xa6 ♖xa6 28. ♖a1! ♖a7 29. f3! e3 30. ♖xe3, when Black is unable to disentangle himself without losing material. But he could have taken the pawn with the knight: 26...♖xa6 27. ♖d1 (after 27. ♖f4 ♖d5 the knights become coordinated) 27...♙d5 28. ♖f4 ♖f8, and the knight on a6 moves out of 'custody'.

27. ♙xd3 exd3



28. ♖c3?!

A poor move, allowing Black to provoke favourable simplification while retaining his extra material. White could have fought for an advantage with the natural 28. ♖d1.

28...♙xc4! 29. ♖xc4?!

After this move the d2-pawn remains alive and White has to fight for equality. More accurate was 29. ♖xc4 ♖e4 30. ♖b2 ♖g8!? 31. ♙g7 ♖xg7 32. ♖b6 ♖aa7 33. ♖fd1 with the idea after 33...♖d4 34. ♖xd4 cxd4 35. ♖xd3 c5 of forcing a draw: 36. ♖c8 ♖a8 37. ♖b6.

29...♖g8! 30. ♖xc5 d2

An impulsive decision, provoked by a desire in time-trouble to fix White's attention on the far-advanced passed d-pawn. From the standpoint of fighting for an advantage, 30...♖d5! 31. ♖c3 (31. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 32. f4 ♖b4) 31...♖h5 32. ♙xg7+ ♖xg7 33. ♖b4 c5 34. ♖e4 ♖xe4 35. ♖xe4 c4 was stronger.

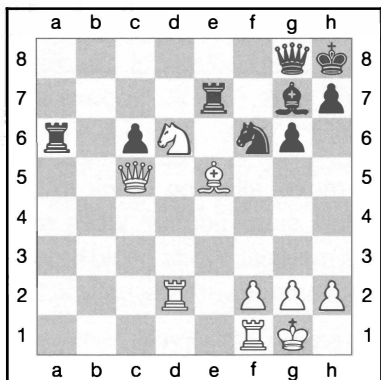
31. ♖ad1 ♖xa6?!

One can understand Black's desire finally to capture the annoying passed pawn. Especially since in severe time-trouble it was hard to evaluate the consequences of the ex-



changing variation 31...♔d5! 32. ♖c3 ♖xe5! 33. ♗xe5 ♗xe5 34. ♕f7+ ♜g8 35. ♕xe5 ♕e4, where for the moment the d2-pawn remains alive, but as Shipov showed, Black is in no danger: 36. ♕c4 ♕c3 37. f3 ♕d4+ 38. ♜h1 ♕f2+ 39. ♖xf2 ♕xf2 40. ♖xd2 ♖xa6, and the draw is not far off.

32. ♖xd2



With the win of the d2-pawn White has also gained a solid positional advantage.

32...♕d5 33. ♕xg7+ ♖xg7?!

The e-file should not have been conceded. 33...♜xg7 34. ♗d4+ ♕f6 was stronger, since now 34. ♖e2! would have put Black in a critical position: 34...♖e7 (Black would not hold out much longer after 34...♕c7 35. ♖fe1 ♖a8 36. ♗xc6) 35. ♖xe7 ♕xe7 36. ♕e8! ♗xe8 37. ♗d4+ ♜g8 38. ♗c4+. But White missed this chance, and everything turned full circle.

34. h3?! ♗e6!

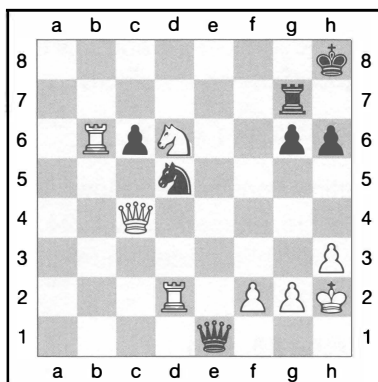
It is important not to concede the e-file to the white rooks.

35. ♖b1 h6 36. ♗c4 ♖b6?

By impulsively aiming to simplify the position, Morozevich misses an opportunity

to create a counter-threat – 36...♖ga7!. Now the piece sacrifice 37. ♖db2?! ♗xd6 38. ♖b8+ ♜g7 39. ♖1b7+ proves ineffective in view of 39...♕c7 (39...♕e7?? 40. ♖g8+! leads to mate in three moves), and after 40. ♖xa7 ♖xa7 41. ♖g8+ ♜f6 White can count only on a draw. Most probably White would have had to restrict himself to 37. ♗d4+ ♜h7 with an unclear position.

37. ♖xb6 ♗e1+ 38. ♜h2



38...♕xb6?

Black overlooks a queen manoeuvre, winning a pawn, just when salvation was at hand: 38...♗xd2 39. ♖xc6 ♗f4+ 40. ♗xf4 ♕xf4 and, in view of all the pawns being on one wing, he can hope for a draw.

39. ♗f4! ♕d5?

Allowing a mating attack. But also after 39...♗e7 40. ♗xh6+ ♜g8 41. ♗f4 ♕d5 42. ♗g3 there was no chance of saving the game.

40. ♖xd5! cxd5 41. ♗f8+ ♜h7 42. ♕e8

Black resigned.

This defeat merely aroused Morozevich, who won four games in a row. But then



again 'awaiting' him was Carlsen. On this occasion Magnus had to demonstrate his defensive skill in a difficult position.

Game 20

A. Morozevich – M. Carlsen

Biel 2006

Sicilian Defence [B30]

1. e4 c5 2. ♖f3 ♜c6 3. ♗b5 ♖f6

Carlsen is seeking fresh ideas in an old variation. 3...g6 occurs far more often.

4. ♗xc6 dxc6 5. d3 ♜d7 6. ♗f4!?

With the knight retreat Black prepared the fixing of the centre with ...e7–e5, and White, while continuing his development, prevents this. The play is more committing after 6. e5 ♜b6. The source game Bologan–Lautier (Poikovsky 2003) continued 7. ♜bd2 ♗f5 8. 0–0 e6 9. b3 ♗e7 10. ♗b2 0–0 11. ♖e1 a5 12. a4 ♜d5 13. ♜e4 ♗c7 with complicated play. But in this variation too Carlsen had some experience: 7. 0–0 c4! 8. d4 ♗g4 9. c3 e6 10. ♗e3 ♗e7 11. ♜bd2 0–0 12. ♗e2 ♗d5 13. b3 ♗a5 14. bxc4 ♜a4 15. ♜b3 (15. ♜e4!?) 15...♗a6 16. h3 ♗h5 17. ♗d2 ♜b6 18. g4 ♗g6 19. ♗g5 ♗xg5 20. ♜xg5 ♗xc4 21. ♗xc4 ♜xc4, and Black achieved the better endgame (Gullaksen–Carlsen, Tromsø 2006).

6...g6 7. ♗c1 ♗g7?!

In his comments on the game Carlsen considers that it was more logical to prevent the exchange of his bishop by 7...h6, aiming to obtain a position similar to the main variation 3...g6 4. ♗xc6 dxc6.

8. ♗h6 ♗a5+!

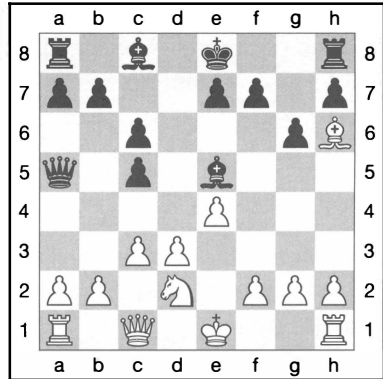
A move with deep implications. Magnus

has found a way to avoid the exchange of bishops. If 8...0–0 there could have followed 9. h4.

9. c3

If 9. ♗d2, then 9...♗b6 is possible.

9...♜e5! 10. ♜xe5 ♗xe5 11. ♜d2



11...♗a6?!

A poor move, and the initial cause of Black's problems. The d3-pawn is easily defended, whereas for a long time the queen proves to be out of play. The more natural 11...♗e6 12. ♜b3 suggests itself, and now 12...♗b5, provoking a weakening of the d4-square (12...♗b6 13. ♗e3 ♗xb3 14. axb3 13. c4 ♗b6 14. ♗e3 ♗d4 with roughly equal chances (variation by Carlsen).

12. ♗c2

Those following this game on the internet wondered what Morozevich was thinking about for so long, since 12. ♜c4 is such a natural move. However, after 12...♗c7 13. ♗e3 (manoeuvres such as 13. ♗g7 ♖g8 14. ♗h6 ♗e6 15. ♗xh7 0–0–0 can hardly be seriously considered) 13...♗e6 14. ♗xc5 0–0–0 White is forced to switch



to defence – 15. ♖g7 ♜he8 16. ♖d4 ♜b8, when his pieces are too cramped. 17. 0–0 can be answered by 17...f5!?, setting White a choice – 18. ♖e5 ♜x d3 19. ♖xc7+ ♜xc7 20. ♜e5+ ♜d7 or 18. exf5 ♖xf5, in both cases with an acceptable game for Black.

12...♖e6 13. f4

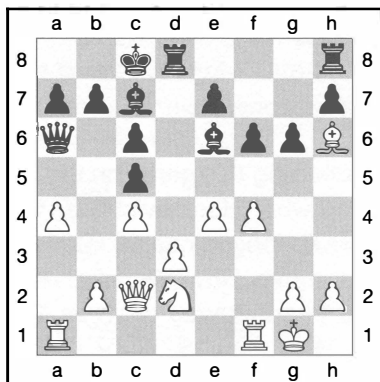
White drives back the bishop to c7, in order to obtain the possibility of playing c3–c4, relieving his concerns over the d3-pawn and still further restricting the queen on a6. In the event of 13. ♖f3 ♖c7 14. ♖g5 Black need not fear the doubling of his e-pawns – 14...0–0–0 (weaker is 14...♖d7 15. ♜b3) 15. ♖xe6 fxe6, since it is not easy to defend the backward d3-pawn: after 16. c4 ♖a5+ 17. ♜e2 Black doubles rooks on the d-file.

13...♖c7 14. 0–0 f6

Preparing the retreat of the bishop to f7 in the event of f4–f5.

15. c4! 0–0–0 16. a4!

The vice tightens. Black's position is desperate, since White's only weakness – the d3-pawn – is easily defended, whereas it is easy for him to plan his attack on the queenside: a4–a5, ♖d2–b3, f4–f5 and ♖h6–e3.



16...♖d7

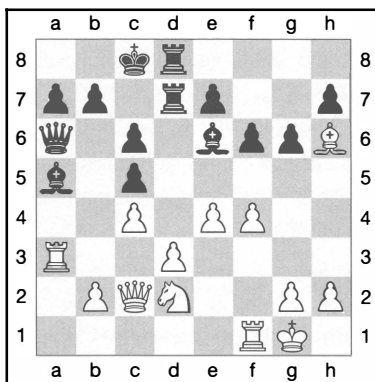
Carlsen recognises the danger of his position, and, realising that 16...♖a5 17. ♖b3 ♖b4 18. a5 is hopeless (the queen is still out of play), he decides on radical measures. He decides to carry out a combined attack on the a5- and d3-pawns, displaying his readiness to part with his trapped queen. Half-measures aimed at cutting off the bishop on h6 apparently did not appeal to him – 16...♜hg8 17. a5 g5 18. ♖b3 b6 19. axb6 ♜xb6 20. fxg5 fxg5 21. ♜c3, when after ♖g7 White controls the position's important highway and retains a stable advantage.

17. a5 ♜hd8 18. ♜a3

The attack on the d3-pawn has come to a standstill, whereas 19. f5 ♖f7 20. ♖e3 is threatened, forcing Black to weaken his king's defences – ...b7–b6. But Carlsen had already taken a decision.

18...♖xa5!

It is better to die standing, than to live on your knees!



19. f5!

White is not in a hurry. The move ♖b3 will not run away, and for the moment it is useful to include the bishop in the attack on the c5-pawn.



19...♙f7 20. f×g6

If 20. ♖b3 there would have followed 20...♗xd3 21. ♖xc5 (in the event of 21. ♗xa5 ♗xc4 22. ♗xc4 ♙xc4 23. ♖xc5 ♗d1 24. ♗xd1 ♗xd1+ 25. ♖f2 b6 the piece is regained) 21...♙b6!. It was on this queen sacrifice that Carlsen's defensive idea was based. After 22. ♗xa6 ♙xc5+ 23. ♖h1 bxa6 a position arises, similar to that which occurred in the game.

20...h×g6 21. e5 ♙e6 22. exf6

It was possible to win the exchange – 22. ♖e4 ♙f5 23. e6 ♗d4 24. ♙e3, but Morozevich is hoping for more.

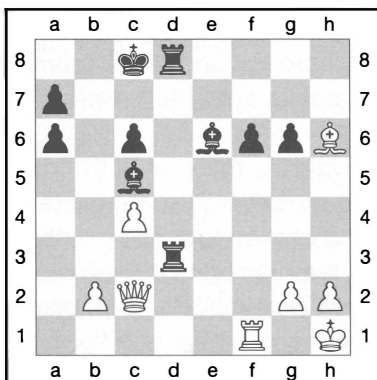
22...exf6 23. ♖b3 ♗xd3 24. ♖xc5 ♙b6

A piece is lost after both 24...♗b6 25. ♗xa5 ♗xa5 26. ♖xe6, and 24...♗xc4 25. ♗xc4 ♙xc4 26. ♖xd3 ♙b6+ 27. ♖f2 ♙xf1 28. ♖xf1.

25. ♗xa6

For White to restrict himself to the win of the exchange by 25. ♗xd3 ♙xc5+ 26. ♖h1 27. ♗xd3 ♙xc4 28. ♗h3+ f5 29. ♗e1 would be too great a concession to Black.

25...♙xc5+ 26. ♖h1 bxa6



This is the position for which Carlsen was aiming in his attempt to save the game. Black has sufficient material compensation for the queen, and his control of the d-file allows him to hope for counterplay in view of White's inadequately defended back rank. Surprisingly, he ignores this factor.

27. ♙g7?

Fate is obviously unkind to Morozevich. Now he loses the game. Of course, it is unjust to end up with a zero after such high-quality play. But objectively, it has to be admitted: the situation has changed, and the coordination of the black pieces can be disrupted only by concrete play: 27. b4! ♙b6 (27...♙xb4 28. ♗a4) 28. ♗e2! ♙f7 (28...♙f5 29. g4!). Now Carlsen suggests the following variation 29. ♗e4 ♖b7 30. b5 axb5 31. cxb5 ♙d5 32. ♗e7+ (or 32. bxc6+ ♙xc6 33. ♗xg6 ♗d1) 32...♖a8 33. bxc6 ♙xc6 34. ♗xf6 ♗3d6 with counterplay for Black. But White can also consider 29. ♙g7 ♗d2 (29...f5?! 30. c5 ♙c7 is not good because of 31. ♙e5!) 30. ♗f3 ♗8d6 31. ♙f8 ♗e6 32. ♗c3 ♗de2 33. ♙c5 ♖b7 34. ♗d3 ♙c7 35. b5, when he nevertheless succeeds in disrupting the coordination of the black pieces.

27...♙g4!

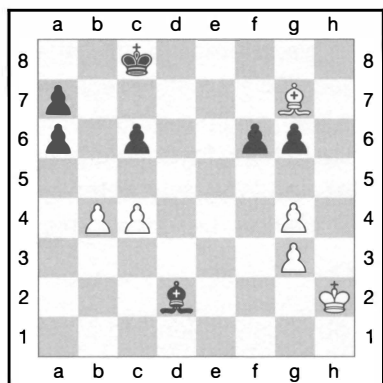
Now White cannot hold his back rank, which gives Black a serious attack.

28. b4

Here this move is now too late.

28...♙e3! 29. h3 ♗d1 30. ♗xd1 ♗xd1+ 31. ♖h2 ♙f4+ 32. g3 ♗d2+ 33. ♗xd2 ♙xd2 34. h×g4

(see next diagram)



34...♙xb4?!

For the moment Carlsen's endgame technique is still shaky. The exchange of pawns allows White to prolong the resistance. White resigned.

There was a quicker win by the thematic diverting-cum-interference move 34...c5! 35. bxc5 ♖g5 36. ♙f8 a5 37. c6 ♙c1, when the a-pawn cannot be stopped.

35. ♙xf6 a5 36. ♖g2 ♖d7 37. ♖f3 ♙d6

These tricks are unnecessary. There was an elementary win by 37...a4 38. ♖e2 a3 39. ♖d3 ♖e6 40. ♙a1 ♙e7 41. ♖c2 ♙f6.

38. ♖e4 ♙xg3 39. ♖d3 ♖e6 40. ♙d4 a6 41. ♖c2 a4 42. ♖b1 ♙e5 43. ♙f2 ♖d6 44. ♖a2 ♙c3 45. ♖a3 ♖e5 46. ♖xa4 ♖f4 47. ♙b6 ♖xg4 48. ♙a5 ♙xa5 49. ♖xa5 ♖f4 50. ♖b6 a5

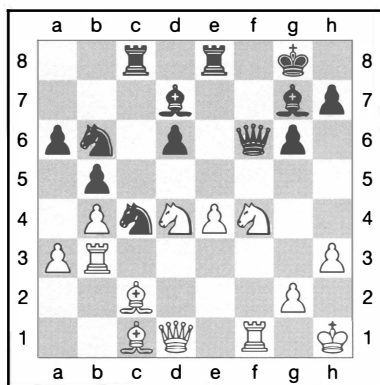
The sternest test of Carlsen's potential came at the Mikhail Tal Memorial Tournament, which took place in November 2006 in Moscow. This was the first time he had played in a FIDE category 20 tournament with such a uniformly strong field. Indeed, half of them were in the top ten in the world rating list, and although Carlsen himself was just 2 points short of the 2700 mark, already in the 1st round the difference was felt. Magnus was given a genuine strategy lesson by Gelfand: 'Just like Chigorin', Yury Razuvaev commented on the manoeuvres of his knights, which outplayed the opponent's bishops. After being given a master class by one of the pupils of the Soviet Chess School, subsequently the youngster held on like a seasoned competitor. For the moment it was hard to hope for anything more, and had it not been for an embarrassment in his game with Aronian (on this occasion he lost a dead-drawn rook endgame), Magnus would have saved face right to the end of the tournament. But as it was – a share of 8th–9th places with 3½ points out of 9. A serious lesson on the eve of his 16th birthday.

Contrary to expectations, Carlsen made a poor start to the year 2007. In his first A Tournament in Wijk aan Zee (FIDE category 19) he suffered a complete failure. Magnus lost four games, without a single win, and shared last place with Shirov. The game between them from the last round was the only one where Carlsen was genuinely close to a win. It was something else that was important. Magnus managed to summon up his courage and demonstrate the potential of a fighter, ready for forthcoming battles.



M. Carlsen – A. Shirov

Wijk aan Zee 2007



26. ♖f5!

Carlsen apparently thought that winning the queen by 26. ♖f6 ♗x6 27. ♗x6 ♗x6 was an insufficient reward for the parrying of the attack.

26...♗h8

It is dangerous to take the knight – 26... ♗x5 27. ♗g3! ♗h8 28. ♗h5 ♗d4 29. ♖xg7! (this is more effective than the capture with the rook) 29... ♗xg7 30. ♗xg7 ♗xg7 31. ♗xg7 ♗xg7 (30... ♗g8 31. ♖xg7 ♗xg7) 31. ♗xg7 ♗xg7, winning the exchange with a continuing attack: 33. ♗xg7 is threatened (variation by Carlsen).

27. ♖xg7 ♗xg7 28. ♗g3

28. ♗b3!? was stronger.

28...♗f8 29. e5!?

A pawn sacrifice on the altar of the attack! Brilliancy lovers will undoubtedly give Carlsen's enterprise its due. And yet, objectively speaking, this is not the most justified solution to the position, since against accurate defence White's plan does not

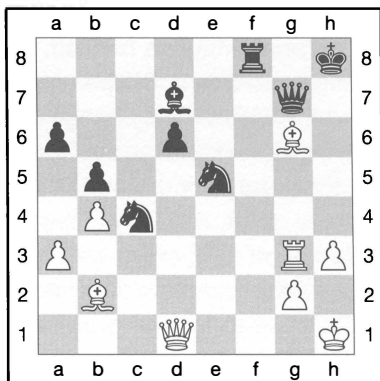
lead to the goal. Here too 29. ♗g3 was more logical.

29...♖xe5 30. ♗b2 ♖bc4 31. ♖xg6+

White has no other way of continuing the attack. 31. ♗d4 allows Black a respite to bring up his reserves and parry the attack: 31... ♗f6 32. ♖d5 ♗xg7+ 33. ♗xg7 ♗f8, retaining the extra pawn.

31...h×g6 32. ♗xg7+ ♗xg7 33. ♗xg6

After 33. ♗xg6 ♖xb2 34. ♗h5+ ♗g8 35. ♗xg7+ ♗xg7 Black's material compensation for the queen is too great.



33...♗g4?

Carlsen comments that both he and Shirov considered this to be the only possible defence, since a continuation of the forcing play by 33... ♗f1+ 34. ♗xg7 ♖xb2 35. ♗e4! ♗h6 36. ♗d5 would have led to a loss for Black, in view of the threat of ♗g8. But this proved to be delusion. After 33... ♗e8! White would have had nothing better than to force a draw by perpetual check: 34. ♗h5+ ♗g8 35. ♗h7+ ♗h8 36. ♗g6+.

34. ♗xg4 ♗f6 35. ♗d4 ♗f1+ 36. ♗xg7 ♗xg7+ 37. ♗h2 ♖xa3 38. ♗d3 ♗d1 39. ♗g3 ♖ac4 40. h4



There is no point in commenting on the practically forced play in the time scramble, except to suggest moving one of the bishops out of the pin – 40. $\text{♟c3!}?$.

40... ♜d2

Only a computer would be capable of finding a defence such as 40... ♜b6! .

The smoke of battle has cleared. With material equal, White has the two bishops, an important factor, given the open character of the position. But subsequently he missed chances to convert his advantage, and the game ended in a draw 20 moves later.

It is unlikely that anyone was expecting Carlsen to succeed in the most prestigious tournament – Morelia/Linares (FIDE category 20), so poor had been his first contacts with the elite grandmasters in Moscow and Wijk aan Zee. It was all the more surprising to see him leading together with Anand after the Mexican half of the tournament. This did not surprise Magnus himself, as he was the most ‘motivated’ fighter in the initial part of the tournament. $3\frac{1}{2}$ points in the first five games – perhaps only Kasparov had managed this! After an exchange of blows with Morozevich and Anand (Carlsen’s ‘evil genius’), he gained successive wins over Ivanchuk and Topalov, who clearly underestimated the youngster. In the Spanish half of the tournament they played against him with more respect, and only in the last round was he unable to do anything to counter the solid strategy of Leko, who was eager to win at least one game. Carlsen was caught by Morozevich, who played brilliantly in the second half of the event. Nevertheless, by scoring ‘plus one’, he clung on to 2nd place, a point behind the winner, Anand. The main outcome of the tournament was that Magnus had learned how to win against elite grandmasters!

He confirmed this at the ‘Melody Amber’ Tournament, staged by Joop van Oosterom in Monte Carlo. This was a unique contest with twelve of the strongest players in the world, personally selected by the patron, who played two games a day – one blindfold and one rapid. Carlsen performed worthily in the rapid event, and with a score of $6\frac{1}{2}$ points he shared 2nd–5th places, behind only the world champion Vladimir Kramnik. He was less successful at blindfold play, where he scored 4 points.

One would have thought that, having passed through the crucible of several prestigious tournaments, Carlsen had earned himself a rest. But ahead lay the Candidates tournament, crowning his first cycle in the battle for the world championship. Before travelling to Elista it was important to raise his fighting spirit in his homeland, and Magnus decided to play in Gausdal, which was close to his heart. In order to ensure the motivation of their idol, the organisers of the ‘Gausdal Classic’ grandmaster tournament did everything possible to raise its level to FIDE category 12. The tournament was in the nature of a warm-up: Magnus easily took the first prize. Over the short distance of 9 rounds he scored 7 points, finishing $1\frac{1}{2}$ ahead of his nearest rival.



Game 21

M. Carlsen – A. Morozevich

Morelia/Linares 2007

King's Indian Defence [E66]

1. d4 ♖f6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 ♗g7 4. ♗g2
0–0 5. ♖c3 d6 6. ♖f3 c5

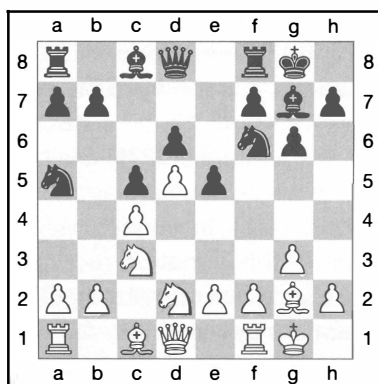
This move characterises the Yugoslav Variation, which was so named thanks to the analyses of Yugoslav players in the 1950s. By attacking the centre from the wing, Black tries to expand the range of his bishop on g7, not fearing the exchange 7. dxc5 dxc5, since in the absence of any weaknesses White can hardly hope for an advantage in this symmetric position. In the event of 7. d5 with 7...b5!? Black can switch to a sharp variation of the Benko Gambit. Therefore after 6...c5 White usually does not hurry to close the centre, but waits for Black to bring out his knight with 7...♖c6, after which he plays 8. d5. In modern tournaments the development 6...♖c6 7. 0–0 a6 is preferred, when after 8. d5 ♖a5 9. ♖d2 c5 a similar pawn structure arises. The attack on the white centre with the central pawn 6...♖bd7 7. 0–0 e5 takes us back to the outstanding ‘fathers’ of the King’s Indian Defence, David Bronstein and Isaak Boleslavsky.

7. 0–0 ♖c6 8. d5

White’s main continuation, leading to a closed position. But in the Yugoslav Variation Black also has to reckon with the transition into the symmetric variation after the exchange 8. dxc5 dxc5, where White can try to exploit the advantage of the first move. But here too Black has counterarguments. For example, after 9. ♗e3 ♗e6 10. ♖a4 he can avoid the symmetry – 10...♖d4!, while if 9. ♗f4 (with the idea of

♖f3–e5) there can follow 9...♖h5 10. ♗e3 ♖d4!.

8...♖a5 9. ♖d2 e5



By closing the centre, Black signifies that his priorities lie in the centre and on the kingside. The drawback to his position is the knight on a5, which is not easy to bring into play.

The other plan with a counterattack in the centre and on the queenside is associated with the undermining of the pawn chain by ...e7–e6 and ...b7–b5 and play on the b-file. It is usually carried out via this move order: 9...a6 10. ♖c2 ♖b8 11. b3 b5.

10. b3

More usual is 10. a3 b6 (10...♖c7? fails to 11. b4! cxb4 12. axb4 ♖xc4 13. ♖b5 ♖b6 14. ♖xc4 ♖xb5 15. ♖xd6 ♖xb4 16. ♗a3 with an obvious advantage for White) 11. b4 ♖b7 12. ♗b2 ♖g4 (if 12...♖e8 White erects the same barricade) 13. h3 ♖h6 14. e3! f5 15. f4 with complicated play.

As for the obvious move 10. e4, it has contradictory assessments. The outstanding King’s Indian expert Yefim Geller regularly employed it, hoping to exploit the undermining move ...f7–f5 to White’s advantage, since on the decisive part of



the battlefield he has one piece more. For example, after 10...♖g4 in his game with Velimirovic (Havana 1971) he responded 11. b3 f5 12. exf5 and after 12...e4? 13. f6! ♖xf6 14. ♖dxe4! ♖xe4 15. ♖xe4 ♖xa1 16. ♖g5 ♖f6 17. ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 18. ♖a1 Black was unable to escape from the vice. But also after 12...gxf5 13. h3 ♖h6 14. ♖b2 with the preparation of f2–f4 it is not easy for Black to create counterplay on the king-side. Nevertheless, the modern view on the problems of this variation recommends that White should avoid allowing Black his main counterplay resource.

With 10. b3 White follows a different conception: he pays no attention to the out-of-play knight at a5 and tries to exploit its absence for the creation of a numerical superiority on other parts of the board, avoiding giving Black something to latch onto for the creation of counterplay.

10...♖g4

The retreat 10...♖e8, preparing ...f7–f5, does not satisfy the non-routinely thinking Morozevich. However, now Black has to reckon with his second knight also being driven to the edge of the board. This creates the constant problem of finding a suitable refuge at the rear for the knights, whose paths intersect at d8. In this respect it is useful to see how this position was handled by Kasparov, who in his game with Beliavsky (Linares 1994) preceded the knight move with 10...♖d7. There followed 11. ♖b2 ♖g4 12. h3 ♖h6 13. e3 (Beliavsky chooses the plan with the blockade of the e5/f5 pawn pair; 13. e4 f5 14. exf5 gxf5 15. ♖c2 followed by f2–f4 is more often played) 13...f5 14. f4 a6 15. ♖c2 b5 16. ♖d1 (White takes his knight via f2 to d3, aiming to provoke a crisis at e5; in

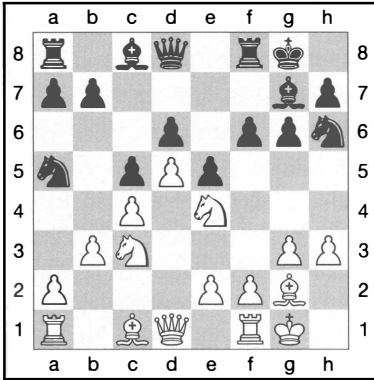
the event of 16. ♖ae1 Black advances his queenside pawns with gain of tempo: 16...b4 17. ♖d1 ♖b7 and then ...a6–a5–a4) 16...♖b8 17. ♖c3! (it is important to remove the bishop from the 'X-ray' of the rook) 17...♖e8 18. ♖b1 ♖f7 19. ♖f2 exf4 (Black has to keep the knight at a5 in view; for example, after the inclusion of the exchange on c4, 19...bxc4 20. bxc4 ♖xb1 21. ♖xb1 exf4 22. exf4, he cannot play 22...♖e3 because of 23. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 24. ♖f1 followed by ♖c3+) 20. exf4 ♖e3 21. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 22. ♖fe1! ♖xe1+ (if 22...♖e7 there follows 23. ♖f3 with the threat of 24. ♖xe3 ♖xe3 25. ♖e1) 23. ♖xe1 ♖f6! (it is important to occupy the long diagonal) 24. cxb5 axb5 25. b4 cxb4 26. ♖c7 ♖d8 27. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 28. ♖d3 ♖c8 with an equal game.

11. h3 ♖h6 12. ♖de4!?

A completely new idea in this position. It is obvious that if 12...f5 there follows 13. ♖g5 with the threat of an invasion at e6. Incidentally, about the effect of a novelty. It often operates like a psychological bomb, and the reaction to it is burdened by this psychological factor: the opponent knows something that I don't know. And to go along with the opponent involves a risk: at the board will it be possible to find everything which he prepared at home? Morozevich did not take the risk, but he went, as they say, from the frying pan into the fire.

12...f6?!

Black refrains from active measures, preparing the knight retreat to f7 and reserving the move ...f7–f5 for better times. Even so, there were no grounds for rejecting the main line of play.



13. ♖xd6!?

This positional sacrifice of a piece for two pawns (the one on c5 cannot be held) sharply changes the character of the play. And although it is to a certain extent intuitive, with his poorly coordinated pieces it is not easy for Black to restrain the d5-pawn. Taking account of the surprise effect, he is forced to solve completely new problems.

13...♗xd6 14. ♖e4 ♗d8

After 14...♗b6 15. ♖e3 the pawn cannot be saved.

15. ♖xc5 f5

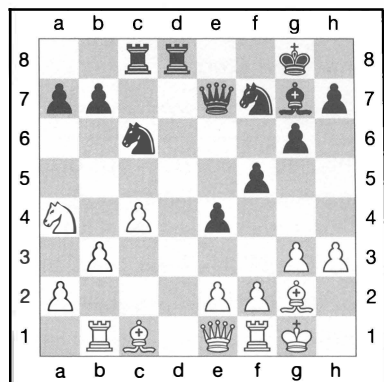
The psychological effect of the piece sacrifice has worked. It is not in Morozevich's style to try and 'dig in'. By returning the material, he coordinates his pieces. However, with his extra pawn Magnus also feels comfortable. But did Black have anything better? He would have been unable to solve his problems after 15...♗c7 16. ♖a3 ♖d8 17. ♖d3 f5 18. ♗c2. For example, it is risky to play 18...e4 19. ♖f4 ♖xa1?! 20. ♖xa1, when he may be unable to survive the 'draught' along the long diagonal. He would have lost material after 15...♖f7? 16. ♖e6 ♖xe6 17. dxe6 ♖d6 18. e7 ♗xe7 19. ♗d5+.

But a conundrum was posed by 15...♖f5!?, which would have set White difficult problems. For example: 16. ♖a3 ♖e8!? (after 16...♗c7 17. ♖e4 b6 18. d6 ♗f7 19. ♖xf6+ ♗xf6 20. ♖xa8 Black achieves less) 17. ♖e4!? (17. g4 ♖h4 18. d6 ♖xg2 19. ♖xg2 ♖f8 with the threat of ...♗xd6 and ...b7-b6) 17...b6 18. g4 ♖h4 19. ♖d6 ♖xg2 20. ♖xe8 ♖f4 21. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 with unclear play.

16. d6 e4 17. d7

After the inclusion of the exchange 17. ♖xh6 ♖xh6 the advance 18. d7 ♖f7 19. dxc8 ♗xxc8 would have allowed Black counterplay, based on the advantageous opposite-colour bishops.

17...♖f7 18. ♖b1 ♗e7 19. dxc8♗ ♖axc8 20. ♖a4 ♖fd8 21. ♗e1 ♖c6



This was the position for which Morozevich was aiming, when he went in for the forcing play beginning with 15...f5. For the sacrificed pawn Black has compensation, in the form of his more active pieces.

22. ♖c3 ♖d4 23. ♖b2

If 23. ♖d5 Black could have sacrificed the exchange: 23...♖xd5!? 24. cxd5 ♖c2, obtaining definite compensation. But after



25. ♖h1 ♜xe2 26. ♙d2 ♜d4 27. ♖c1 ♖xa2
28. ♖c8+ ♙f8 29. ♙b4 ♜d6 30. ♚d1 ♜d5
31. ♖c2 ♖xc2 32. ♚xc2 White's chances
are still better.

23...b5 24. ♜d5

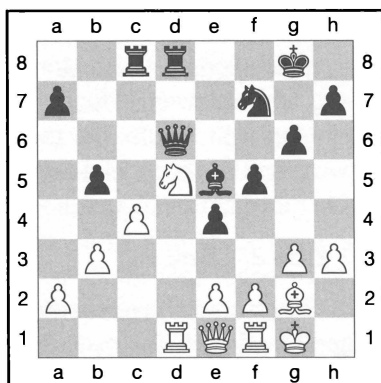
24. e3 suggests itself, after which the manoeuvre 24...♜c2 25. ♚e2 ♙xc3 26. ♙xc3 ♜a3 27. ♖bd1 looks dubious in view of the weakness of the long dark-square diagonal, while 24...♜f3+ 25. ♙xf3 exf3 26. ♜xb5 would have led to the win of a second pawn, although also with an element of risk – the white king's defences are weakened.

24...♚d6

24...♚c5!? was more vigorous, when in the event of 25. ♜f4 ♚d6 26. cxb5 ♖c2 27. ♙xd4 ♙xd4 28. ♖d1 e3 29. fxe3 ♙xe3+ 30. ♜h2 ♚e5 Black's active pieces would have given him definite compensation for the sacrificed material.

25. ♙xd4 ♙xd4 26. ♖d1 ♙e5?

Black misses a chance opportunity to exchange a pair of pawns: 26...bxc4!? 27. ♖xd4 cxb3 28. axb3 ♖c5 29. f3 ♖xd5 30. ♖xd5 ♚xd5 31. fxe4 fxe4 32. ♚c3, when White's achievements are less than in the game.



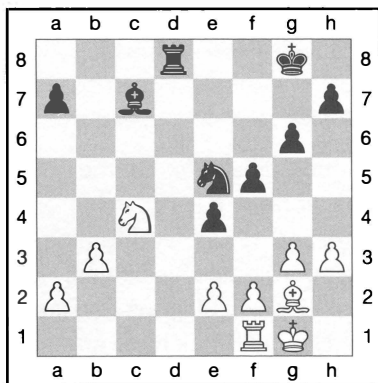
27. ♚a5

It should not be forgotten that this game was played in the first round of the most prestigious tournament of the year, and after his failure in Wijk aan Zee Carlsen was sub-consciously aiming for clarity. Possibly, therefore, he prefers to transpose into a technical endgame, rather than play a middlegame with a couple of extra pawns: 27. cxb5 ♚c5 28. b4 ♚d6 29. a4, which involves some risk.

27...bxc4 28. ♜e3! ♚c7 29. ♚xc7 ♙xc7 30. ♜xc4 ♜e5

As a result of the exchanging operation White has obtained an endgame with an extra pawn and a stable pawn structure, where Black's practical saving chances are associated with the opposite-colour bishops. With every exchange these chances are improved.

31. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8



32. ♖c1!

The active knight has to be exchanged, after which White will 'revive' his bishop, regroup his forces, and at a convenient moment undermine Black's pawn chain with g3–g4.



**32...♖xc4 33. ♖xc4 ♜d1+ 34. ♙f1 ♙d6
35. e3 a5!**

It is useful to halt the pawns at the distant approaches to the queening squares.

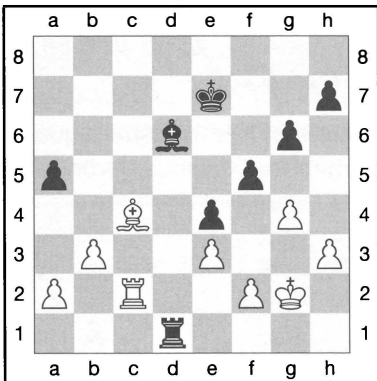
36. ♘g2

The prophylactic 36. ♜c2 was more accurate, preventing the possible 36...♜d2.

36...♙f7 37. ♜c2 ♙e7 38. ♙e2 ♜d5

After 38...♙a1 White would probably have carried out the same plan as in the game.

39. ♙c4 ♜d1 40. g4



40...f4?

A committing decision. Any neutral move, such as 40...♙f6, would have retained practical drawing chances. Now, however, White wins the e4-pawn. True, it is with the help of a tactical trick, which was easy to overlook when making the last move before the time control.

41. exf4 ♙xf4 42. ♜e2 ♜d4 43. ♙d3!

Now Black has to play on two pawns down. The only consolation is the possibility of exchanging rooks, transposing into a pure ending with opposite-colour bishops. Retaining the rooks – 43...♜xd3 44. ♜xe4+ leads to a hopeless rook ending.

43...♙f6

43...♜xd3? fails to 44. ♜xe4+ and 45. ♜xf4.

44. ♙xe4 ♜d2! 45. ♜xd2 ♙xd2 46. ♙g3

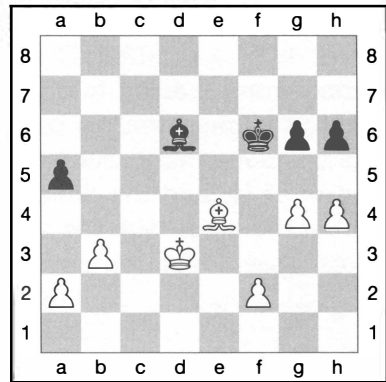
If White were able to advance f2–f4 with his pawn on h3, the position would be won for him. But he is not able to do this.

46...♙e1 47. ♙f3 ♙b4 48. h4 h6

49. ♙e2 ♙d6

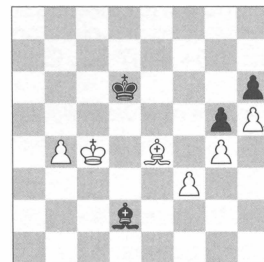
The kingside should have been blocked – 49...g5 50. h5, when it would not be easy for White to find a winning plan.

50. ♙d3



50...♙c5

Black misses the last opportunity to play 50...g5, when after 51. h5 ♙e5 52. f3 ♙b4 it would not be easy for White to convert his material advantage. His chances are associated with the creation of an outside passed pawn: 53. ♙c4 ♙a3 54. ♙b5 ♙b4 55. ♙a4 ♙d2 56. a3 ♙d6 57. ♙b5 ♙e1 58. b4 axb4 59. axb4 ♙d2 60. ♙c4.



Analysis diagram



The critical position. White would like to divert the black pieces by the advance of the b-pawn and then create a second passed pawn on the h-file with the help of the f2–f4 breakthrough, which works, for example, after 60...♙e1? – 61. f4! gxf4 62. g5. In the event of 60...♙c1 White wins using the typical idea of restricting the opponent's king – 61. ♔d5!, enabling his own king to go to e4 and then on to the h6-pawn – 61...♙f4 (if 61...♙b2 the pawn advances – 62. b5, while if 61...♙e3 62. ♔d3 the king breaks through to e4) 62. ♔d4 ♔d2 63. b5 ♙a5 64. ♔e4 ♙b6 65. ♙c4 and ♔e4–f5 (M. Marin).

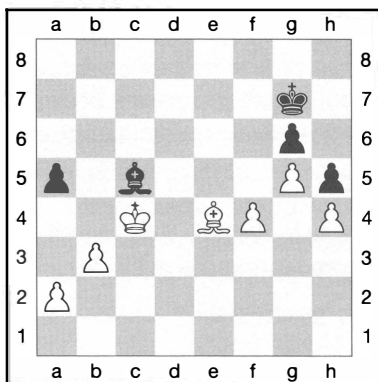
The only move leading to a draw is 60...♙e3!. It is important to keep the b6-square under control, without lifting the control of f4, and the 'knight opposition' of the kings with the support of the bishop enables the position to be held. If 61. ♔d5 or 61. ♙a8 there follows 61...♔e5, and nothing is given by 61. b5 or 61. ♔d3 because of 61...♙b6. The march of the king to a6 – 61. ♔b5 is restrained by 61...♔d2. Incidentally, here too the opposition can be maintained – 61...♔c7 62. ♔a6 ♔b8, since after the advance of the pawn to b6 the f3–f4 breakthrough does not achieve its aim: the passed h-pawn is held by the bishop, and if the white king goes to its aid, Black wins the b6-pawn, by diverting the white bishop with his passed pawns.

51. f4 h5 52. g5+ ♔g7 53. ♔c4

(see next diagram)

53...♔d6?

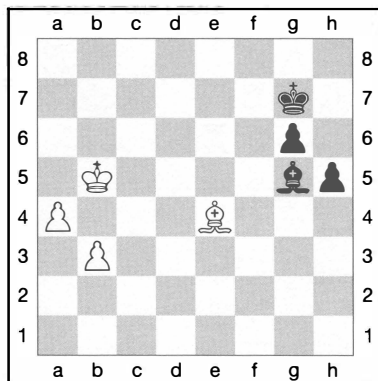
It is illogical to give the opponent connected passed pawns. 53...♔f2 54. ♔b5 ♙e1 55. a3 ♔f7 56. ♔d3 ♔g7 57. ♔e2 ♔f8



58. f5 gxf5 59. ♔xh5 ♔e7 was stronger, retaining chances of saving the game.

54. ♔b5 ♔xf4 55. ♔xa5 ♔g3 56. ♔b5 ♔xh4 57. a4 ♔xg5

Black has restored material equality, but the pawn race is obviously won for White.

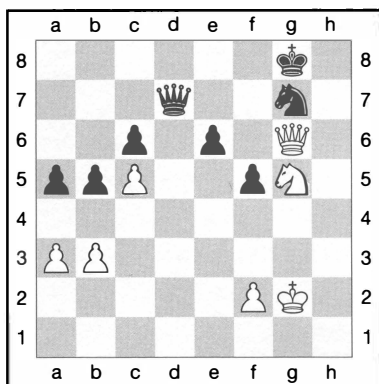


58. a5 ♔f6 59. a6 ♔e3 60. ♔c6 g5 61. b4 ♔e5 62. b5 ♔xe4 63. b6 g4 64. a7 g3 65. a8 ♖ ♔f3 66. b7 ♔f4 67. ♖f8 ♔e4 68. ♖e8+

Black resigned.

**M. Carlsen – V. Topalov**

Morelia/Linares 2007



Here something inexplicable occurred with Topalov. He resigned the game, not finding any way to save his knight, and he merely shrugged his shoulders in perplexity when Magnus showed him how to do this: 64...♔d5+ 65. f3 e5. White has nothing more than perpetual check by 66. ♖h7+ ♜f8 67. ♖h8+ ♖g8 68. ♔h7+ ♜f7 69. ♔g5+.

Game 22**M. Carlsen – V. Ivanchuk**

Morelia/Linares 2007

Grünfeld Defence [D87]

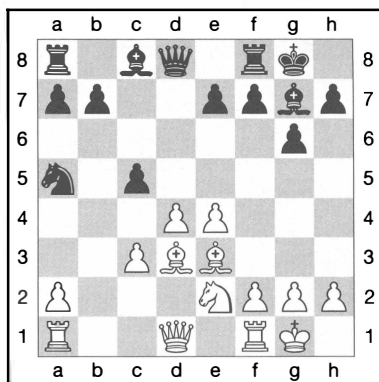
1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 d5 4. cxd5 ♘xd5 5. e4 ♘xc3 6. bxc3 ♙g7 7. ♙c4 c5 8. ♘e2 ♘c6 9. ♙e3 0–0 10. 0–0

This is the so-called main variation of the Grünfeld Defence. It was here that the first attempts were made to refute what has turned out to be the ‘evergreen’ idea of the Austrian grandmaster Ernst Grünfeld (3...d5!), first carried out in 1922.

10...♘a5

Over previous decades Black’s main continuation was 10...cxd4 11. cxd4 ♙g4 12. f3

♘a5. Nowadays plans are also practised where Black does not hurry to relieve the pawn tension. Ivanchuk follows the traditional path, retaining the option after the bishop retreat of reverting to familiar lines by exchanging pawns, but the course of events in the game, where the knight at a5 played the role of a spectator, may subsequently have led him to another, possibly more promising continuation: 10...♖c7 11. ♖c1 ♘d8. The game Cheparinov–Ivanchuk (Cap d’Agde rapid 2008), continued 12. ♙f4 ♙e5!? 13. ♙xe5 ♘xe5 14. ♙b3 ♘g4 15. ♘g3 ♖f4 16. ♖f3 ♖xf3 17. gxf3 ♘f6 18. ♖fd1 ♜f8 19. ♘e2 b6 20. e5 ♘h5 21. dxc5 ♙a6 22. ♘g3 ♘f4 23. cxb6 axb6 with excellent compensation for the pawn, typical of Grünfeld-type positions.

11. ♙d3**11...b6**

This variation has become popular in recent years. Of course, Black could also have returned to the main line by playing 11...cxd4.

12. ♖c1

If White captures the pawn – 12. dxc5?! bxc5 13. ♙xc5, then after 13...♖c7 14. ♙d4 e5 15. ♙e3 ♙e6 16. ♖c2 ♘c4 Black has full compensation.

12...cxd4

With the rook on c1, Carlsen considers



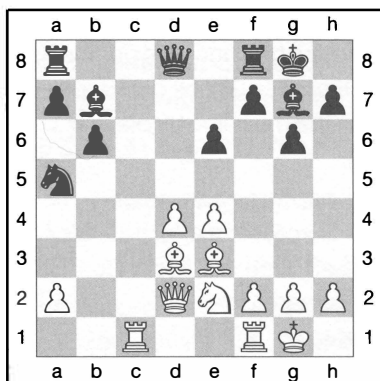
the opening of the c-file to favour White. Indeed, to neutralise the control of the c-file Black has to go in for the exchange of rooks, which reduces the possibility of creating piece play typical of the Grünfeld Defence. 12...♖c7 looks to be in the spirit of the position, although it is not easy to shake the pawn centre. Black's problems are illustrated by the game Jakovenko–Areshchenko (World Cup, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009): 13. ♖d2 ♙b7 14. ♙h6 ♙ad8 15. ♙xg7 ♙xg7 16. f4 f5?! 17. exf5 gxf5 18. ♖e3 ♖d6 19. ♖cd1 c4 20. ♙c2 ♙d5 21. ♖e5+ ♖xe5 22. fxe5 e6 23. ♙f4 ♙f7 24. ♖de1 ♙e7 25. ♖e3 b5 26. ♖b1 a6 27. ♖h3 ♖f7 28. ♖h6 ♙c6 29. ♙d1! 1-0.

After 13. ♖d2 Black can consider 13...e5, when in the event of 14. dxe5 ♙xe5 15. f4 ♙g7 16. e5 ♖d8 or the immediate 14...♖d8 (intending 15. ♙g5 ♙a6!) he obtains excellent play. However, 14. f4!? is more critical.

13. cxd4 e6

If 13...♙b7 there would have followed 14. d5!, restricting the bishop, and Black is obliged to prevent this move. However, this leads to a weakening of the dark squares on the kingside, which creates the grounds for an attack.

14. ♖d2 ♙b7



15. h4

A strong move, introduced by the German grandmaster Rainer Knaak in a game with Malich (Halle 1976). White begins a flank attack without risking the loss of a pawn, since in the event of 15...♖xh4? 16. ♙g5 ♖h5 (things are not changed by 16...♖g4 17. f3 ♖h5 18. ♙g3 ♙xd4+ 19. ♖f2) 17. ♙g3 ♖g4 18. ♙e2 the queen is lost.

15...♖e7?!

Surprisingly, Ivanchuk follows Malich, who already then had become convinced about the drawbacks to this move and had recommended 15...♖d7, which Black adopted in later games with his variation. True, without particular success. For example, the game Knaak–Kir. Georgiev (East Germany 1987) continued 16. ♙h6 ♖ac8 17. h5! ♖xc1 18. ♖xc1 ♖c8 19. ♙xg7 ♖xc1+ 20. ♖xc1 ♙xg7 21. h6+! with advantage to White.

The move in the game is obviously not in the spirit of the position, since it assists White's plan of exploiting the weakness of the dark squares. Carlsen considers the best defence to be 15...♙c6, after which he was intending to play 16. e5. But a radical solution in the spirit of the Sicilian Dragon also comes into consideration: 15...h5!?, nipping in the bud the threat of the h-pawn's advance. For example, the game Timman–Baramidze (Bundesliga 2007) continued 16. ♙g5 ♖d7 17. ♙h6 ♖fc8 18. ♙xg7 ♙xg7 19. ♖g5 ♖d8 20. ♖g3 ♖xc1 21. ♖xc1 ♖c8 22. ♖e1 ♙c6 23. d5 ♙b4 24. ♙b1 exd5 25. a3 ♙c2 26. ♖d1, and here 26...♖e8! would have led to equal play.

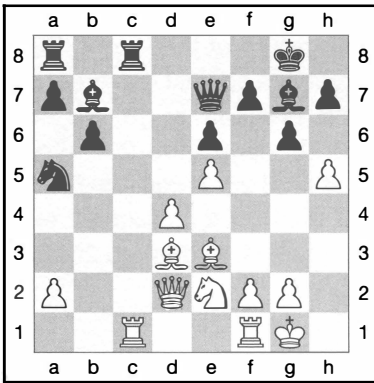
16. h5!

This is stronger than 16. ♙g5 f6 17. ♙f4, as played in the Knaak–Malich game, where



White did not achieve anything significant.

16...♖fc8 17. e5!



The concrete solving of problems by Carlsen, who immediately ‘takes the bull by the horns’, is impressive. White prepares the ground for the exchange of the bishop on g7, regardless of the weakening of the long light-square diagonal, which Black is not able to exploit. Previously 17. ♗g5 ♜a3 18. e5 was preferred, and, to judge by stories about Magnus’s outstanding memory, this idea was well known to him.

17...♖xc1?

This was clearly not Ivanchuk’s day. The exchange of all the rooks deprives Black of his last hopes of creating counterplay. As Carlsen comments, first and foremost the knight should have been brought back into play – 17...♞c6.

The prophylactic 17...♜d7, preparing to besiege the d4-pawn after 18...♞c6, was also in the spirit of the position.

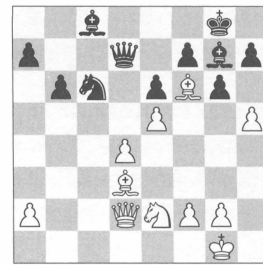
18. ♖xc1 ♖c8

If 18...♜d7 White attacks: 19. ♗g5 ♖c8 20. ♖xc8+ ♜xc8 21. ♗f6 ♞c6 22. ♜g5! (22. ♗xg7 ♞xg7 23. ♗e4 ♞e7 allows Black to hold the position) with the threat of

♞e2–f4. For example: 22...♜f8 (22...♜e8 23. h×g6 h×g6 24. ♞f4 ♞xd4 25. ♞h5! or 22...♗a6 23. ♗xa6 ♜xa6 24. ♞f4) 23. h×g6 h×g6 (23...f×g6 24. ♞f4) 24. ♞f4 ♗h6 25. ♜h4 ♞xd4 26. ♞xg6 f×g6 27. ♜xd4 etc.

19. ♖xc8+ ♗xc8 20. ♗g5 ♜c7

Black misses the last chance for a successful defence: 20...♜d7, as suggested by Ivanchuk in his commentary on the game. ‘This is more resilient’, agrees Carlsen, ‘But even so after 21. ♗f6 in any case it is very hard to believe that Black is able to survive.’ After the best reply 21...♞c6 Black’s position is still dangerous.



Analysis diagram

White can continue the attack as in the game: 22. ♜g5 ♞xd4 23. ♗xg7 ♞xg7! (weaker is 23...♞xe2+ 24. ♗xe2 ♞xg7 25. h6+! ♞f8 26. ♜f6 with the threat after ♗e2–d3×g6 of queening the h-pawn, while in the event of 26...♜d2 27. ♗f1 ♗b7 28. ♜h8+ ♞e7 29. ♜xh7 White picks up an important pawn and succeeds in returning with his queen – 29...♗xg2 30. ♜g7 ♜d1 31. ♜f6+ ♞f8 32. ♞xg2 with an extra piece) 24. ♜f6+ ♞f8 25. ♞f4! (25. h6 is justified only in the event of 25...♞xe2+ 26. ♗xe2, but by playing 25...♞f5! Black holds the position: 26. ♜h8+ ♞e7 27. ♞f4 ♞xh6 28. ♜xh7 g5) 25...g×h5 26. ♗xh7 ♜c7 27. ♞xh5, and the attack continues.



Another way of attacking is 22. ♖f4 with the idea of 23. ♕xg7 ♜xg7 24. ♖f6+ ♜f8 25. ♕xg6! hxg6 26. h6 and the pawn is irresistible. Black loses after 22... ♕x6 23. gxf6 ♖d8 (23... ♖e8 24. ♕b5 ♕d7 25. ♕xc6 ♕xc6 26. ♖c7 leads to the loss of a pawn) 24. hxg6 fxg6 (24... hxg6 25. ♖g5 ♜f8 26. ♕xg6) 25. f7+! ♜g7 26. ♕b5 ♕d7 27. ♕xc6 ♕xc6 28. f8♖+, winning the bishop. After the bishop retreat 22... ♕f8 again 23. ♖g5 is possible. Let us consider the main variations:

a) 23... ♜xd4? 24. ♜xd4 ♖xd4 25. hxg6 fxg6 26. ♕xg6 and White wins;

b) 23... ♕b7?! 24. hxg6 fxg6 25. d5! exd5 (otherwise 26. d6) 26. ♕xg6 hxg6 27. ♖xg6+ ♕g7 28. e6 and wins;

c) 23... ♜e7 24. hxg6 fxg6 25. ♜f4 ♕b7 26. ♖g4 ♕d5 27. ♕xe7 ♖xe7 (27... ♕xe7 28. ♜xg6!) 28. ♜xd5 exd5 29. ♖c8 with advantage to White – he is threatening 30. ♖c6;

d) 23... ♜b4 (the most resilient) 24. hxg6 fxg6 25. ♕xg6! hxg6 26. ♖xg6+ ♕g7 27. ♜f4 ♖f7 28. ♖g5 ♜h7 29. ♖h4+ ♜g8 30. ♕xg7, and by coordinating his queen and knight (as *Rybka* indicates), White combines an attack on the king with the threat of winning one of the pieces:

d1) 30... ♜xg7 31. ♜h5+ ♜f8 32. ♖d8+ ♖e8 33. ♖f6+ ♖f7 34. ♖h8+ ♜e7 35. ♜f6 ♖f8 36. ♖h4;

d2) 30... ♖xg7 31. ♜h5 ♖h6 32. ♜f6+ ♜g7 33. ♖g4+ ♖g6 34. ♜e8+ ♜h7 35. ♖h3+ ♖h6 36. ♜f6+ ♜g6 37. ♖g4+! ♖g5 38. ♖e4+ ♖f5 39. ♖h4 ♜g7 40. ♜e8+ ♜g6 41. ♖h8.

White has carried out his plan, and now it only remains to get to the king.

21... ♜c6

A belated return of the knight. But Black has no defence against the threat of ♖d2–g5 with a ‘break-in’ at g6. For example: 21... ♕f8 22. ♖g5 ♜c6 23. hxg6 hxg6 24. ♕xg6 fxg6 25. ♖xg6+ ♕g7 26. ♕xg7 ♖xg7 27. ♖e8+, or 21... ♕xf6 22. exf6 ♖d8 23. ♖g5 ♜c6 24. hxg6 fxg6 25. ♕xg6!.

22. ♖g5

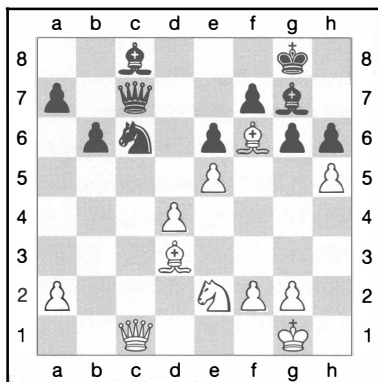
White is inexorable in the conduct of his plan. He is threatening to capture on g7 followed by h6+ and ♖f6, and if 22... ♕f8 the bishop sacrifice is decisive.

22... h6

A forced weakening, since White was threatening 23. ♕xg7 ♜xg7 24. ♖f6+ ♜f8 25. h6 when the pawn cannot be stopped.

23. ♖c1!

The pin on the knight emphasises the hopelessness of Black’s position.



23...g5

If 23... ♖d7 White wins by 24. hxg6 fxg6 25. ♜f4 ♜xd4 26. ♜xg6. But now to the

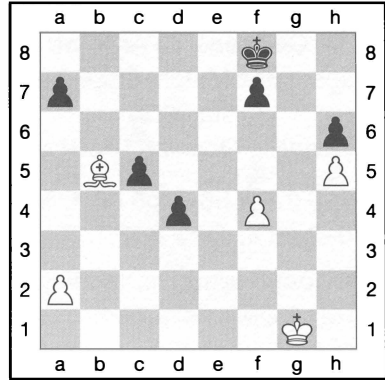
21. ♕f6!



vertical pin is added a diagonal one, which leads to the loss of a piece.

24. ♖b5 ♖d7 25. d5! exd5 26. ♜d4
 ♖xf6 27. exf6 ♜d6 28. ♖xc6 ♜xf6
 29. ♖xd7 ♜xd4 30. g3 ♜c5 31. ♜xc5
 bxc5 32. ♖c6 d4 33. ♖b5 ♜f8 34. f4
 gx f4 35. gx f4

Black resigned.



The Candidates tournament in the new cycle of the individual world championship was a notable event in Carlsen's chess career. The very appearance of a 16-year-old candidate for the world crown was an extraordinary phenomenon. The only player to have previously achieved this was Bobby Fischer, among whose opponents were the stars of the post-war wave of Soviet grandmasters. Playing in the Candidates Tournament in 1959 were such titans of the Soviet Chess School as Paul Keres, Vasily Smyslov, Mikhail Tal and Tigran Petrosian, who are now legends of world chess. The present-day Candidates have their stars, and although the list of real contenders for the chess crown is shorter, this does not reduce the intensity of the fight at the top level.

At the Candidates Tournament in Elista, held on the knock-out system, Carlsen was paired with Levon Aronian, the brightest young representative in the chess elite. Forecasts regarding the outcome of the match were one-sided. The clear favourite was the Armenian grandmaster, with whose strength and experience one could hardly compare the potential of the uncommonly talented but not yet battle-hardened youngster. Here it was forgotten that, with prodigies, time moves on a different scale, and that which takes others years, they resolve within months. And the Carlsen who went into battle in Elista was a 'renovated' version, one who had markedly gained in strength during his contact with the elite. True, in his opening preparation there were still gaps, and the first game of the match appeared to confirm the unfavourable forecasts. Carlsen, who was not yet ready for opening disputes, went in for an unpretentious anti-Marshall variation in the Ruy Lopez and contrived to lose an absolutely equal position. In the 2nd game the self-confident Aronian was not eager to build on his success, and in the third game, like a sphinx, Magnus rose from the ashes and levelled the scores.



Game 23

M. Carlsen – L. Aronian

Candidates Match, 3rd Game

Elista 2007

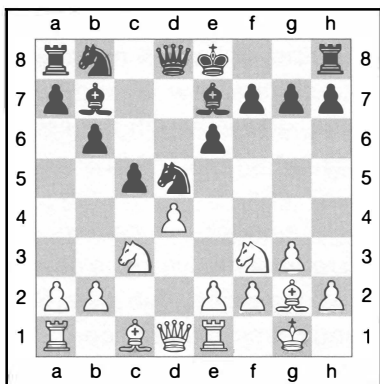
English Opening [A30]

1. $\text{d}f3$ $\text{d}f6$ 2. $\text{c}4$ $\text{b}6$ 3. $\text{g}3$ $\text{c}5$ 4. $\text{e}g2$
 $\text{e}b7$ 5. $0-0$ $\text{e}6$ 6. $\text{d}c3$ $\text{e}e7$ 7. $\text{e}e1$ $\text{d}5$

The most popular move, leading to the creation of a mobile pawn centre for White. Lovers of the 'hedgehog' structure prefer 7... $\text{d}6$ 8. $\text{e}4$ $\text{a}6$ 9. $\text{d}4$ $\text{c} \times \text{d}4$ 10. $\text{d} \times \text{d}4$ $\text{c}c7$.

8. $\text{c} \times \text{d}5$ $\text{d} \times \text{d}5$ 9. $\text{d}4$

This move is usually made after the preparatory exchange 9. $\text{d} \times \text{d}5$ $\text{c} \times \text{d}5$. The following also occurs: 9. $\text{e}4$ $\text{d}b4$ (9... $\text{d} \times \text{c}3$ 10. $\text{b} \times \text{c}3$ $0-0$ 11. $\text{d}4$ transposes) 10. $\text{d}4$ $\text{c} \times \text{d}4$ 11. $\text{d} \times \text{d}4$ $\text{d}8\text{c}6$ 12. $\text{d} \times \text{c}6$ $\text{c} \times \text{d}1$ 13. $\text{e} \times \text{d}1$ $\text{e} \times \text{c}6$. In both cases this leads to an early exchange of queens.



9... $\text{d} \times \text{c}3$

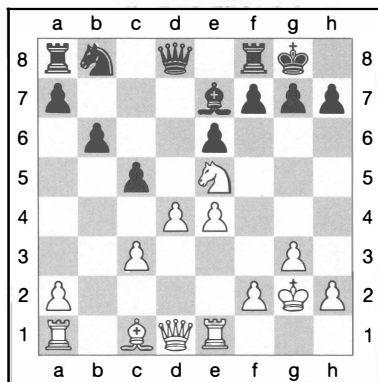
The preparatory exchange 9... $\text{c} \times \text{d}4$ 10. $\text{c} \times \text{d}4$ $0-0$ comes into consideration, while if 10. $\text{d} \times \text{d}5$ there is the good reply 10... $\text{c} \times \text{d}5$.

10. $\text{b} \times \text{c}3$ $\text{e}e4$

Although the experience of the main continuation 10... $0-0$ 11. $\text{e}4$ $\text{c} \times \text{d}4$ 12. $\text{c} \times \text{d}4$

$\text{d}c6$ 13. $\text{e}b2$ gives preference to White, Black's defensive resources should also not be underestimated. The attempt to prevent the creation of the pawn centre fails in this objective.

11. $\text{d}e5!$ $\text{e} \times \text{g}2$ 12. $\text{e} \times \text{g}2$ $0-0$ 13. $\text{e}4$



13... $\text{c}8$

A new idea for solving Black's opening problems, compared with 13... $\text{e}f6$ 14. $\text{d}g4$ $\text{c} \times \text{d}4$, as was played in the game Yermolinsky–Atalik (Berkeley 2005). There followed 15. $\text{e}a3$ $\text{e}e7$ 16. $\text{e} \times \text{e}7$ $\text{c} \times \text{e}7$ 17. $\text{c} \times \text{d}4$ $\text{e}d8!$ 18. $\text{d}5$ $\text{e} \times \text{d}5$ 19. $\text{e} \times \text{d}5$ $\text{c}d6$, and here White could have retained the better chances by 20. $\text{e}c1!$ $\text{d}a6$ 21. $\text{c}f3$ $\text{d}c5$ 22. $\text{e}cd1$. Black can also consider 14... $\text{d}c6!$? 15. $\text{e}e3$ $\text{c} \times \text{d}4$ 16. $\text{c} \times \text{d}4$ $\text{c}d7$ with an equal game.

14. $\text{c}g4$

The alternative is 14. $\text{d}5!$? $\text{e}f6$ 15. $\text{e}f4$ with the better chances for White.

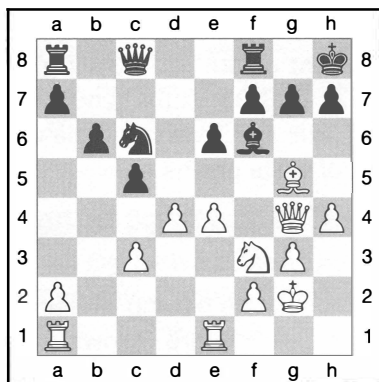
14... $\text{e}f6$ 15. $\text{d}f3$

With the threat of $\text{e}4-\text{e}5$ and $\text{e}h6$.

15... $\text{e}h8$ 16. $\text{h}4!$

Magnus always has such an attacking move in mind, especially since 16... $\text{h}6$ does nothing to prevent 17. $\text{e}g5!$.

16... $\text{d}c6$ 17. $\text{e}g5!$



17...cxd4

For Black, who is under fire, it is not easy to hold the position. 17...♙xg5 18. h×g5 will not do, since it allows the rook to be included in the attack along the h-file. His difficulties are only aggravated by 17...♚d8 18. ♖ad1 cxd4 19. cxd4, when he has to reckon with the d4–d5 breakthrough. Therefore Black agrees to the deformation of his kingside pawn structure, which may tell not only in the middlegame, but also in the endgame.

18. ♙x6 g×f6 19. cxd4

The queen exchange could have been avoided – 19. ♚f4 ♚d8 20. cxd4 with the better game, but Carlsen has perceived certain advantages for White in the endgame and he provokes the opponent's reply.

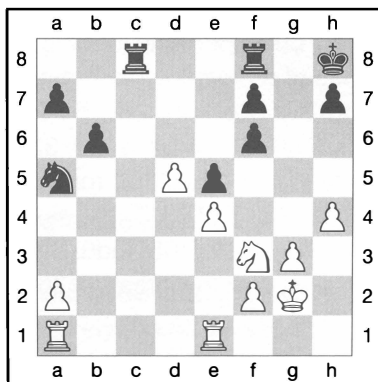
19...e5

There appears to be nothing better. If 19...♚d8 there is the good reply 20. ♚f4, when 20...♙xd4? fails to 21. ♖ed1 e5 22. ♙xe5.

20. ♚xc8 ♖axc8 21. d5 ♙a5

Black transfers his knight to the d6 blocking point. 21...♙b4 is illogical on account

of the simple 22. ♖ed1 followed by an attack on the queenside by a2–a4.



22. h5!

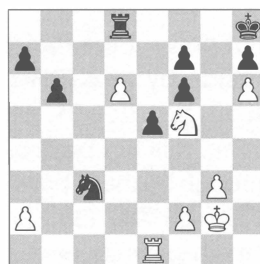
Not only clearing the knight's path to the key f5-point, but also with the aim of 'sealing in' the king, which will be unable to render any assistance to its forces.

22...♙c4 23. ♙h4 ♙d6 24. h6 ♖c3?!

24...♖c4 suggested itself.

25. ♖ac1! ♖fc8

For a rook, an open file is a gulp of fresh air. Aronian makes use of the last practical chance. In rejecting the capture of the pawn – 25...♙xe4, he appreciated White's intention of attaching 'epaulettes' to the king at h6 and d6 – 26. ♙f5! ♖d8 (after 26...♖fc8? 27. ♖xc3 ♙xc3 the pin 28. ♖c1 is decisive) 27. ♖xc3 ♙xc3 28. d6.



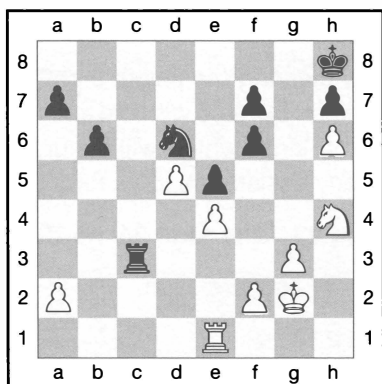
Analysis diagram



Tableau! – this was how the French would have assessed the resulting position.

The invasion of the rook on the c-file is threatened, but supporting the knight leads to the loss of a pawn, without essentially changing the position: 28...b5 29. ♖c1 b4 30. a3 a5 31. axb4 axb4 32. ♖c2. White intends to play ♖b2, for example, 32...♗d7 33. ♖b2 ♖b7 33. ♖xb4!, since after 33...♖xb4 34. d7 ♖b8 35. ♔d6! Black has no defence against the threats of 36. ♔xf7+ and 36. ♔c8.

26. ♖xc3 ♖xc3



27. ♔f5!

This is where the depth of the h4–h5–h6 manoeuvre is felt. White forcibly transposes into a rook ending where the black king is tightly ‘sealed in’ by the f5- and h6-pawns.

27...♔xf5 28. exf5 ♔g8

Black cannot prevent the rook’s invasion on the kingside by 28...♖c4 in view of 29. d6 ♔g8 30. ♖d1 ♖c8 31. g4! when he is in zugzwang. It is not possible to avert the breakthrough by the g-pawn: 31...♔f8 32. d7 ♖d8 33. g5 ♔e7 (33...fxg5 34. f6) 34. g6 and the h-pawn queens (variations by Carlsen).

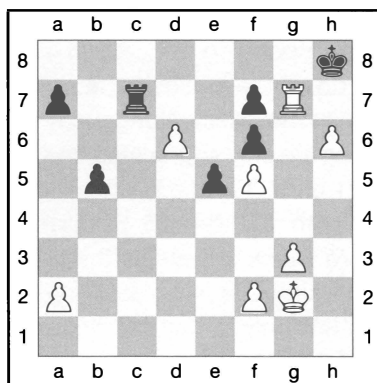
29. ♖e4! ♔f8 30. ♖g4 ♖c7

In the event of 30...♖d3 31. ♖g7 ♖xd5 32. ♖xh7 ♔g8 33. ♖g7+ ♔h8 34. ♖xf7 ♖a5 35. ♖xf6 Black cannot cope with the armada of white pawns.

31. ♖g7 b5 32. ♖xh7 ♔g8 33. ♖g7+ ♔h8

White is as though playing with an ‘extra’ king. If 33...♔f8 there follows a breakthrough by the h-pawn – 34. d6! ♖d7 35. ♖g4 and 36. h7.

34. d6



34...♖d7

34...♖b7 is more resilient, with the idea of creating a passed pawn, but then a raid by the king proves decisive: 35. ♔f3 b4 36. ♔e4 a5 37. ♔d5 a4 38. ♔c6 b3 39. axb3 axb3 40. ♔xb7 b2 41. d7 b1♚+ 42. ♔c7 ♖c1+ 43. ♔d8 ♖c5 44. ♖xf7, and after ♖e7 the king hides from the checks at g6.

35. ♔f3 b4 36. ♔e4 ♖xd6

After 36...a5 37. ♔d5 a4 White wins by the same method as in the preceding note.

37. ♖xf7 ♖a6 38. g4 ♔g8 39. h7+ ♔h8 40. g5 fxg5 41. f6

Black resigned.



After the 4th game everything appeared to have come full circle. Now on his guard, Aronian played with great composure and did not let Carlsen 'off the ropes'. For the Norwegian, behind 1½–2½ in the match, only one chance remained – to make use of his last White in the 5th game. And he did this brilliantly.

Game 24

M. Carlsen – L. Aronian

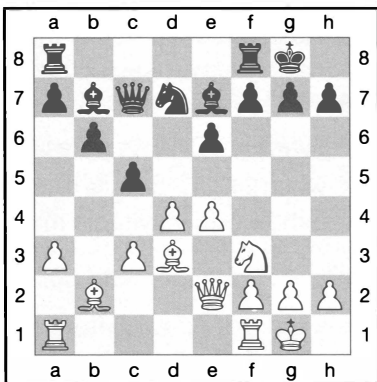
Candidates Match, 5th Game
Elista 2007

Queen's Indian Defence [E12]

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♘f3 b6 4. a3 ♙b7
5. ♘c3 d5 6. cxd5 ♘xd5 7. ♖c2 ♙e7
8. e4 ♘xc3 9. bxc3 0–0 10. ♙d3 c5
11. 0–0 ♖c7

11...♖c8 came into consideration, with the idea of exchanging the bishop after ...♙a6.

12. ♖e2 ♘d7 13. ♙b2



Carlsen had experience of playing the Petrosian Variation, although with the black pieces. At the tournament in Biel (2005) Gelfand attacked him with 13. e5, and this is what happened: 13...♙fd8 14. h4 ♘f8 15. ♙e3 ♖c6 16. ♙fd1 ♙ac8 17. h5 h6 18. ♘e1 ♘h7 19. ♖g4 ♘g5 20. ♘h2 ♘h8 21. a4 ♘e4 22. ♙dc1 ♙g5 23. f4 f5 24. ♖e2 ♙h4 25. ♘f3 ♙e7 26. ♙b5 ♖c7 27. ♙c4 ♖d7 28. ♙b5 ♖c7 29. ♙c4 ♖d7 ½–½.

13...c4

An unexpected decision in the context of the match.

In making this strategically risky move, Aronian surely should have had a 'bomb' up his sleeve. After all, by relieving the pawn tension (of course, 14. ♙xc4 ♙xe4 is unfavourable for White), he granted White a mobile pawn centre with prospects of an attack on the kingside, which meant that he had to aim to strike first on the queenside. But it would appear that he was merely counting on Carlsen's psychological depression after the defeated suffered the day before.

Usually in this variation Black maintains the pawn tension by developing his rooks at c8 and d8. Here are two typical examples on this theme:

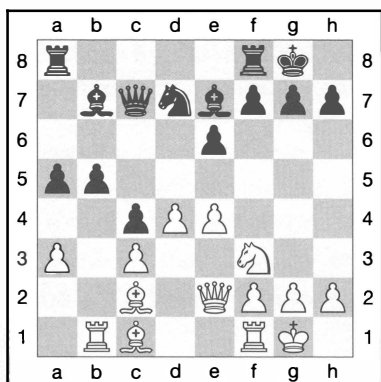
Kasparov–Kramnik (Linares 2004): 13...♙ac8 14. ♘d2 ♙fd8 15. ♙fd1 ♘f6 16. a4 cxd4 17. cxd4 ♙b4 18. ♘f3 ♖e7 with equal chances;

Ponomarev–Leko (Tal Memorial, Moscow 2006): 13...♙fd8 14. d5 exd5 15. exd5 ♙f6 16. c4 b5! with good counterplay for Black.

14. ♙c2 b5 15. ♙c1

After Black has 'locked' the long diagonal, the bishop is doing nothing at b2, and so it joins the attack on the kingside, aiming for g5.

15...a5 16. ♙b1

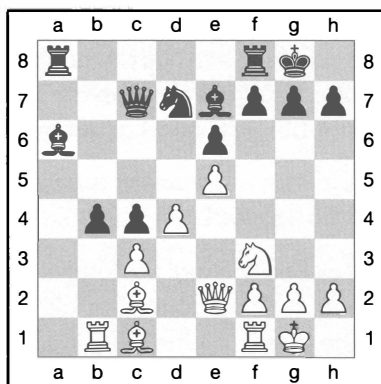
**16... ♖a6?!**

When there are attacks on opposite wings, every tempo is important. Therefore 16... b4! 17. axb4 axb4 18. cxb4 ♖a2 was more logical, with sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn (Carlsen).

17. e5 b4?

But now this move is too late. It was time for Black to concern himself with his king: 17... ♖fe8 18. ♘g5 ♘f8 19. ♗h5 ♖xg5 20. ♖xg5 with a somewhat inferior, but sound position.

If 17... ♖fb8 Black has to reckon with the breakthrough 18. d5!? exd5 19. e6.

18. axb4 axb4**19. ♖g5**

This obvious move decides the outcome of the game, since the attack against the undefended kingside looks extremely dangerous. But also interesting is the pragmatic view of the young professional, who considers the best move to be 19. ♖xb4! with the win of a pawn. The rook cannot be taken because of a standard attack: 19... ♖xb4 20. ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 (or 20... ♖h8 21. ♘g5 g6 22. ♗f3! ♖g7 23. ♗f4 with the threats of ♘xe6+ and ♗h4) 21. ♘g5+ ♖g8 (21... ♖g6 leads to mate after 22. ♗e4+ f5 23. exf6+ ♖h5 24. ♗h7+ ♖g4 25. h3#) 22. ♗h5 ♖fe8 23. ♗xf7+ ♖h8 24. ♖e1!, and Black has no defence against the switching of the rook to h3.

19... ♘b6

Naturally, 19... ♖xg5? 20. ♘xg5 h6 21. ♗e4 f5 22. ♘xe6 ♗c8 23. ♗f4 would have been suicidal.

20. ♗e4 g6 21. ♗h4 ♖a7

Not 21... ♖xg5 22. ♘xg5 h5 23. ♖xb4 ♘d5 24. ♘e4!, when 24... ♘xb4 fails to 25. ♘f6+ ♖g7 26. ♘xh5+ with inevitable mate.

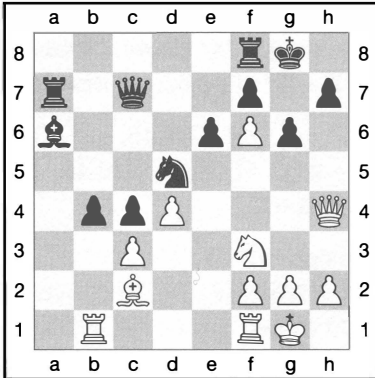
22. ♖f6!?

Of course, the extra pawn after 22. ♖xe7 ♗xe7 23. ♗xe7 ♖xe7 24. ♖xb4 ♘d5 is too small a gain in such a powerful position. Carlsen was aiming only for an attack, but, having cooled down after the battle, his pragmatic view inclined in favour of 22. ♖xb4, since here too the win of the exchange – 22... ♖xb4 23. ♖f6 ♖b8 24. cxb4 – leads to a very strong attack on the king (25. ♘g5 is threatened). After 22... ♘d5 23. ♖a4 White remains a pawn up (23... ♘xc3? 24. ♖xe7 ♗xe7 25. ♗xe7 ♖xe7 26. ♖xa6 leads to the loss



of a piece), retaining threats to the king. For example, in the event of 23...♙b5 24. ♖xa7 ♗xa7 25. ♙e4 Black's position is unenviable.

22...♙xf6 23. exf6 ♘d5



24. ♙e4

Amazing pragmatism! By threatening the exchange on d5 Carlsen provokes the exchange of queens, preferring to go into an endgame with an extra pawn, rather than an attack with 24. ♘e5, which looks very attractive. For example: 24...b3 25. ♙e4 ♗d6 26. f4 ♗e8 27. ♙xd5 exd5 28. f5, building up the threats. This is correct, but what can be suggested after 24...bxc3 25. ♙e4 ♗d6?

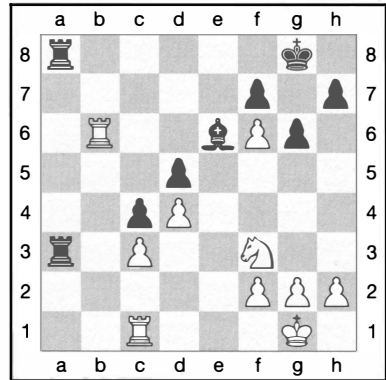
24...♗f4 25. ♙xd5 ♗xh4 26. ♘xh4 exd5 27. ♖xb4

White's main trump in this ending is the 'nail' on f6. By sealing the kingside, it effectively guarantees White an extra piece – his king, the role of which in the endgame is hard to overestimate.

27...♙c8 28. ♖b6

Prophylaxis against the threat of ...♖a6.

28...♖a3 29. ♖c1 ♙e6 30. ♘f3 ♖fa8



31. h4!

Signalling the start of an attack on the kingside. Although Black's defences appear solid, Magnus sees a way to launch a decisive storm.

31...h6 32. ♘e5 ♖a1 33. ♖xa1!

The only way of fighting for a win. If 33. ♖bb1 Black can reply 33...♖1a3!, restricting White's offensive actions.

33...♖xa1+ 34. ♔h2 ♖a3 35. ♖b8+ ♔h7 36. f4!

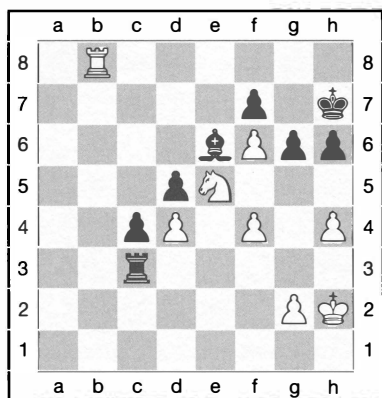
An essential link in White's plan is the diversion of the bishop (f4–f5 is threatened). To convert his advantage it is important for him to win the f7-pawn without exchanging the minor pieces, since in the event of 36. ♖f8 ♖xc3 37. ♘xf7 ♙xf7 38. ♖xf7+ ♔g8 39. ♖g7+ ♔f8 40. ♖xg6 ♖d3 the rook ending is not worse for Black (variations by Carlsen).

36...♖xc3

(see next diagram)

37. h5!

A brilliant solution! The pawn offensive with a small army creates a fine aesthetic impression. Black could not have prevented this move by ...h6–h5, since after ♘f3–g5 he would have been mated.



37...g×h5

Forced, since if 37...g5? there follows 38. f5 ♕×f5 39. ♖×f7 with unavoidable mate.

38. ♖f8 ♖a3 39. f5! ♕×f5 40. ♖×f7+ ♜g8 41. ♖g7+ ♜f8 42. ♖b7! ♖a8 43. ♜g3!

The king decides the outcome. If 43...c3 there follows 44. ♜f4 c2 (44...♕e6 45. ♖e7) 45. ♜×f5! with mate in four moves.

43...♖d8 44. ♜f4 ♕e4 45. g3! c3 46. ♖f7+ ♜g8 47. ♖g7+ ♜f8 48. ♖d7+ ♖×d7 49. ♖×d7

Black resigned.

In the 6th game Carlsen again deserved the highest praise – this time for the defence of a difficult position.

Game 25

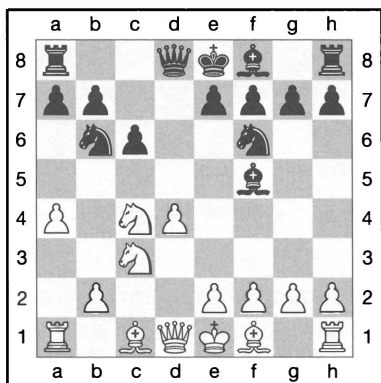
L. Aronian – M. Carlsen

Candidates Match, 6th Game

Elista 2007

Slav Defence [D17]

1. d4 ♖f6 2. ♖f3 d5 3. c4 c6 4. ♖c3 d×c4 5. a4 ♕f5 6. ♖e5 ♖bd7 7. ♖×c4 ♖b6



Capablanca–Vidmar (Carlsbad 1929), the main continuation was considered to be 7...♖c7 8. g3 e5 9. d×e5 ♖×e5 10. ♕f4 ♖fd7 11. ♕g2 f6, where in recent times Black has begun to experience difficulties after 12. ♖×e5. For example, the game van Wely–I. Sokolov (Dutch Championship 1998) continued 12...♖×e5 13. a5 a6 14. 0–0 ♕d6 15. ♖e4 ♕e7 16. ♖b3 with a small but enduring positional advantage for White. Therefore, not without reason, Ivan Sokolov made a detailed study of 7...♖b6 8. ♖e5 a5 and took it up. It was this that Carlsen employed in this important game.

8. ♖e5 a5 9. g3 ♖fd7

This continuation is employed far more rarely than 9...e6 10. ♕g2 ♕b4 11. 0–0 0–0, and since the advance of the e-pawn is not threatened, for the moment it is not essential for Black to perform such pirouettes.

But also Carlsen's decision to exchange

For many years, beginning with the game



the active knight rather earlier is probably no accident.

10. ♖xd7

Nothing significant is promised by the knight retreat 10. ♖f3. For example, the game Svidler–Wang Yue (China 2008) continued 10...e6 11. e4 ♕g4 12. ♕g2 e5 13. 0–0 exd4 14. ♖xd4 f6 15. ♕e3 ½–½. If 10. ♖d3 there can follow 10...e5!? 11. dxe5 ♖c5 with active counterplay for the pawn.

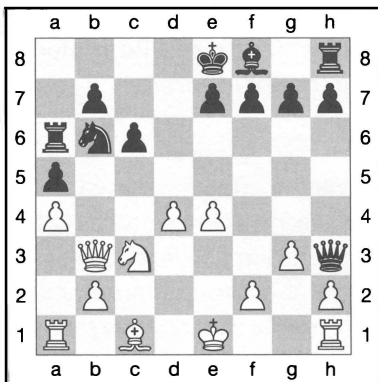
10...♖xd7

In the event of 10...♖xd7 11. ♕g2 e6 12. 0–0 ♕b4 13. e4 the centre has to be conceded without sufficient reason.

11. e4 ♕h3

In the game P. H. Nielsen–Timman (Malmö 2002) Black decided first to weaken White's kingside: 11...♕g4?! 12. f3 ♕h3 13. ♕xh3 ♖xh3 14. ♖b3 ♖a6 15. ♕e3 ♖g2? 16. 0–0–0 ♖xf3 17. ♖he1, and his delay in castling led to defeat. It should be mentioned that after the better 15...e6 16. ♖f2 White also has the advantage.

12. ♕xh3 ♖xh3 13. ♖b3 ♖a6



The first impression is that Black has no

reason to be dissatisfied with his position. He has managed to remove White's 'sting' – the g2-bishop, one of the main performers in such a position, supporting the d4–d5 breakthrough, and at the same time it is not easy for White to exploit the awkward position of the rook on a6. However, White's reply changes the picture.

14. ♕f4!

From here the bishop can attack the knight on b6. In the game Gyimesi–Bu Xiangzhi (Germany 2007) White developed his bishop more passively – 14. ♕e3 and after 14...e6 15. d5 ♕b4 16. dxe6 ♖xe6! 17. ♖xe6+ fxe6 18. ♕xb6 ♖xb6 19. 0–0–0 ♕c5 20. f4 ♖e7 he had an inferior endgame.

14...e6 15. ♕e5!

A well-known technique: before placing the bishop on its designated square – c7, in passing White tries to extract some benefit by provoking a weakening of the kingside.

15...♕b4

The drawbacks to 15...f6 are revealed by 16. ♕c7 ♕b4 17. 0–0–0 0–0 18. ♖e2! (after 18. ♖a2 c5 19. ♖xb4 c4!? Black has serious counterplay: 20. ♖a3 axb4 21. ♖xb4 ♖xa4 22. ♖xb7 ♖fa8). Now, in view of the threat of ♖f4 or even ♖g1, it is not easy for Black to defend his e6-pawn. He can hardly contemplate either 18...g5 19. ♖g1 ♖g2 20. ♖xe6+ ♖h8 21. ♖h3 with a compromised kingside, or 18...♖g2 19. ♖xe6+ ♖h8 20. ♖f4! ♖xf2 21. ♖hf1 ♖e3+ 22. ♖b1 with a trapped queen. The main drawback of Black's position is obvious – his pieces are badly placed. On encountering difficulties, Carlsen sacrifices a pawn, hoping to gain time to coordinate his forces.

**16. ♖xg7 ♖g8 17. ♖e5 ♖g2**

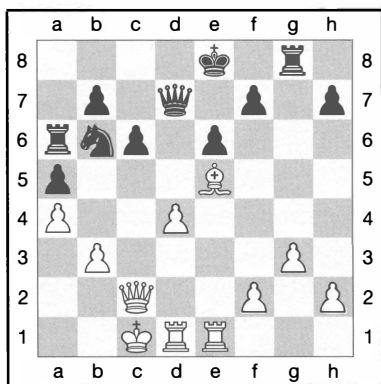
Black regains the pawn, a central one moreover, which gives him the d5-square – an excellent base for his pieces. True, for this he has to exchange his bishop, weakening his dark-square periphery. But in White's position too the light squares are weak. The question is whose strategy is the more discerning.

18. 0-0-0 ♖xc3 19. ♖xc3

White is hoping to extract more from the position than the endgame after 19. bxc3 ♖xe4 20. c4 ♖e2 21. c5 (not 21. ♖d3? ♜xa4! with the threat of ...♖b6) 21...♖c4+ 22. ♖xc4 ♜xc4.

19...♖xe4 20. ♖he1 ♖d5

Normally it is important to blockade the weak point in front of an isolated pawn. In the given situation, where the king has not castled, this is doubly important: the opening of the position after a pawn breakthrough cannot be allowed. This could occur after 20...♖f5 21. d5! ♜xd5 (after 21...cxd5 22. ♖c7 the b7-pawn is lost) 22. ♖xd5 exd5 23. ♖c5!, when Black has no defence.

21. b3 ♖d7 22. ♖c2

Despite all his trickery, as yet Black has not managed to consolidate his forces,

whereas White has his sights set on the h7-pawn.

22...♖e7

Carlsen dislikes passive play and he decides to sacrifice a pawn to activate his pieces as much as possible. There is logic in this – there are plenty of weaknesses in White's position, and Black can greatly hinder the advance of the pawns. In such a situation it is customary to rely on intuition, but the consequences of passive defence also have to be weighed up: 22...♖g6!? 23. ♜b2 ♜d5 24. h4 h5 25. ♖e2 ♖g4 26. f3 ♖g6 27. g4 ♖e7, and Black is still holding the position. Nothing is given by either 28. gxh5 ♖h6, or 28. g5 ♖b4, while if 29. f4, then 29...f6 looks a satisfactory reply.

23. ♖xh7 ♖g6

After the preparatory 23...♖a3+ 24. ♜d2 ♖g6 Black has to reckon with 25. ♖e3! ♜d5 26. ♖h8+ ♜d7 27. ♖f3, reminding Black that he also has a king. Therefore Carlsen would have to seek the exchange of queens by 24...♖a2+ 25. ♖c2, but, knowing Aronian's technique in the conversion of a minimal advantage in simple positions, he does not want to allow White a comfortable life and he prefers to go fishing in troubled waters.

24. ♖e3

One gains the impression that both players are thinking in the same direction and are not in a hurry to exchange queens. Carlsen is afraid to go into an endgame, while Aronian is also not in a rush, hoping to finding chances in the middlegame, in which he is hardly taking any risk: it is difficult for Black to create any counterplay,



since he has to worry about his own king. After 24. ♖h8+ Black would have been unable to avoid the queen exchange, since with his king in the centre he would have to reckon with the opening of the position. For example, if 24...♔d7, then 25. d5! followed by 26. ♖b8 (the immediate 25. ♖b8 does not work because of 25...♖a3+) and the queen, coordinating with the bishop, creates dangerous threats.

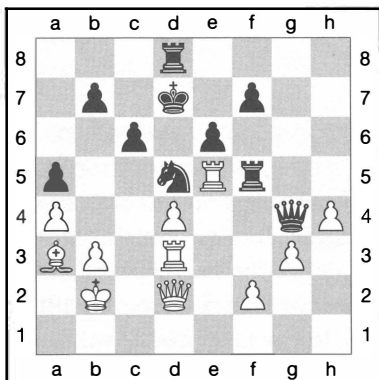
24...♔d5 25. ♖f3 ♖f8 26. h4 ♖h6

Carlsen again decides against going into the endgame after 26...♖h6+ 27. ♖xh6 ♖xh6. For the same reason after the retreat of the rook he does not play 27...♖a3+.

27. ♖c2 ♖a8 28. ♖d2 ♖h5 29. ♔b2 ♖g8 30. ♖e1 ♖g6 31. ♔d6 ♖d8

The young Norwegian manoeuvres with his pieces like a highly-experienced grandmaster, observing the basic rules of actions by the defending side. He avoids pawn advances and any activity, keeping a careful eye on the opponent's manoeuvres. 31...♔d7, not removing the defence of the a5-pawn, can also be recommended. But Magnus prefers to defend this pawn with counterplay.

32. ♔a3 ♖g4 33. ♖d3 ♖f5 34. ♖e5 ♔d7



35. ♖e2

Carlsen has nevertheless won the psychological battle. White's manoeuvres have not led to anything, and Aronian himself offers the exchange of queens. In the event of 35. ♖x5 ♖x5 36. ♖e2 ♔c8 Black finally resolves the problem of his king.

35...♖g8!?

And this is already the challenge of a self-confident fighter. Black avoids the natural exchange 35...♖xe2+ 36. ♖xe2, not fearing the doubling of his pawns by 36. ♖xg4 ♖xg4 37. ♖x5 exf5, since White cannot prevent ...f5–f4.

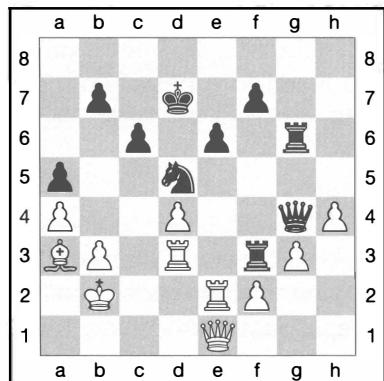
36. ♖e1

Aronian appreciates his opponent's audacity and returns to the previous manoeuvring strategy.

36...♖g6 37. ♖e2

Here the exchange 37. ♖x5 exf5 is unfavourable on account of the possible manoeuvre ...♖g6–e6–e4.

37...♖f3?!



Up till now Carlsen has acted irreproachably, but in time-trouble his composure



deserts him. He forces events, changing the character of the position, although it was possible to continue the strategy of indirectly defending the a5-pawn, by attacking the f2- and d4-pawns: 37...♖g8 38. ♖c2 ♗g6 39. ♖d1 (39. ♗xa5? ♕f4) 39...♗f6 etc.

38. ♖xf3 ♗xf3 39. ♖c2 ♗f6 40. ♗xa5 ♗xd4+ 41. ♕a2 ♖f6 42. f4?!

After Black's lapse on the 37th move White has managed to break through to the queenside, at the same time ridding himself of his isolated d4-pawn. However, by removing his f-pawn from attack, he creates a backward pawn on g3, which significantly eases Black's defence. The correct continuation was pointed out by Rogozenko: 42. ♕c5! ♗e4 43. ♖d2 ♖f3 44. ♗a7 ♕c7 45. ♕e3! with the idea of 46. ♗d4, exploiting the fact that 45...♕xe3?? is not possible on account of the mating attack 46. ♗a5+ b6 47. ♗a7+.

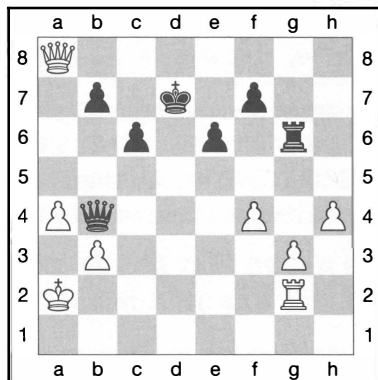
42...♖g6 43. ♗a8

This leads to simplification, which could have been avoided by 43. ♖d2 with the probable continuation 43...♗e3! 44. ♗b4 ♕c7 45. ♗d6+ ♕b6 46. ♗d8+ ♕a6 47. ♗a8+ ♕b6 (47...♗a7 48. ♗xa7+ ♕xa7 49. ♖d3 leads to a better endgame for White) 48. a5+ ♕c7 49. ♕d6!? ♕d7 (after

49...♕xd6? 50. ♗d8+ ♕c5 51. ♖xd5+! and 52. ♗b6 the queen is lost), and Black is still holding the position.

43...♕b4+ 44. ♕xb4 ♗xb4 45. ♖g2

The last attempt to retain an advantage – 45. ♖c4 ♗d2+ 46. ♕a3 ♕c7! 47. ♗f8 ♖xg3 48. ♗xf7+ ♗d7 49. ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 would have resulted in a drawn rook endgame.



45...♖xg3!

A worthy conclusion to this titanic struggle.

46. ♖xg3 ♗d2+ 47. ♕a3 ♗c1+

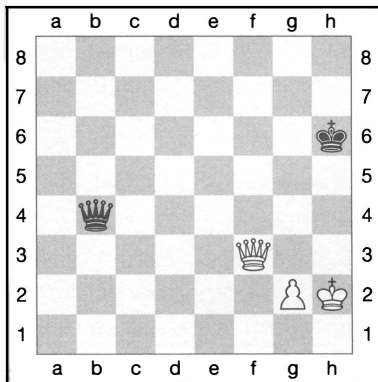
Draw.

Such a draw is worth any win. To hold out in a very difficult battle at a critical moment of the match signified a moral victory for Carlsen.

And so, 'normal time' ended in a 3–3 draw, and the match continued with a tie-break of four rapid games. And everything repeated itself again. Aronian won his first 'White' game and for the third (!) time took the lead in the match. After two draws Carlsen had one last chance to make use of the white pieces in what was already the 10th game of the match. And he performed a miracle, fighting 'to the last bullet', and winning a theoretically drawn endgame.



M. Carlsen – L. Aronian
Candidates Match, 10th Game
Elista 2007



In pre-reform times, when games were played with the classical time control and there were adjournments, one cannot imagine such an ending being resumed. The pawn cannot be converted. This is obvious, but not for the present-day 'condensed' times, when the competitive element prevails over logical play. Nowadays, following the FIDE reforms, games are played to a finish, and players are ensured against losing on time by the addition of extra seconds after each move. And so Carlsen plays on. What is striking is the professionalism with which he plays this ending, even under the rapid time regime: here there is the rule 'do not hurry' (it is more difficult to defend than to attack), restraint in advancing the pawn

(making it taboo for Black to exchange the queens), and the maximum activation of the king.

**69. ♖h3 ♜b1 70. ♜f6+ ♖h7 71. ♜f3
♜g7 72. ♖h4**

The technique of coordinating the king and queen while keeping the pawn on its initial square is impressive. In a rapid-play finish it is not easy to defend – it is important not to run into an exchange of queens. Black exaggeratedly plays without checks, only moving his king, placing it on safe squares.

**72...♜h7 73. ♜f7+ ♖h8 74. ♜h5+ ♜g7
75. ♜g4+ ♖h7 76. ♜h5+ ♜g7 77. ♜e5+
♜h7 78. ♜d5 ♜g7 79. ♜d4+ ♖h7
80. ♜d7+ ♖h8 81. g4**

The pawn comes into play at the most appropriate moment, provoking Aronian into giving checks with his queen.

81...♜h1+ 82. ♜g5 ♜c1+?

This next impulsive check leads to defeat. The position could have been held by 82...♜e4 or even 82...♜a8!?, with a tactical point: 83. ♜f5 ♜g8+ 84. ♖h6 ♜g7+ 85. ♖h5 ♜f7+ 86. ♜xf7 – stalemate!

83. ♜g6 ♜b1+ 84. ♜f5

Black resigned.

And so, the tie-break also ended in a draw, 2–2. The winner was due to be decided in a blitz match of two games, and if necessary an 'Armageddon' game would be played. But things did not come to this. The ability to play five-minute chess has its specific features, and here the clear favourite was Aronian, who won both games, and with them the match.

Carlsen gave a critical appraisal of his defeat: 'Aronian is very strong', he replied to a correspondent of the magazine *64 Shakhmatnoe obozrenie*. 'The match with him was a good lesson; I realised that there is still much to learn about chess, much to study.'



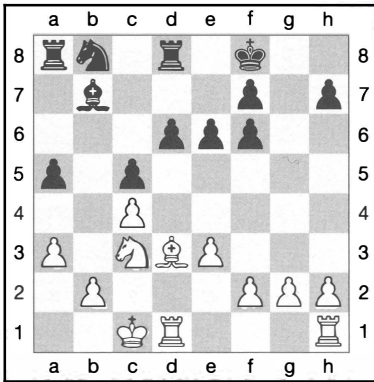
Levon caused me a mass of unpleasant surprises in the middlegame. In addition, I basically couldn't get out of the opening with the black pieces.' But, despite the defeat, it was this match that brought Carlsen up to a new level. The 16-year-old grandmaster presented himself to the chess community as a real contender for the world crown in the near future. He presented himself in particular as an inflexible fighter! Three times in a week he equalised, twice in decisive games – only those possessing a champion's character are capable of this.

Three weeks for 'repairs' before the start of the third 'pillar' of the world chess calendar – the Sparkassen GM Tournament in Dortmund (FIDE category 20) was not a long time. It is well known that this was a kind of personal fiefdom of Kramnik, who by that time had won there on eight occasions. The other participants were also no pushover. Carlsen was in a cautious mood: 'When there are so many solid opponents: Kramnik, Anand, Gelfand, Leko – playing is not easy. They exert pressure with their every move, not losing concentration for a second. In this sense Dortmund was in general the most difficult super-tournament of the year for me: Morelia/Linares or Wijk aan Zee was full of fighters such as Ivanchuk or Topalov, who themselves play and also allow their opponents to play. Here there were no such players.' Therefore he was not too disappointed with the result: a loss to Kramnik (where he was thoroughly outplayed by the champion in his favourite Catalan Opening) and fighting draws with the rest was no reason to be upset. Especially since three weeks later there was the tournament in Biel, where the opposition was not quite so strong.

On this occasion the organisers of the festival in Biel had changed the format of their main tournament. They increased the number of participants to ten, and, despite the absence of Morozevich, the main victor of the last few years, they were able to raise the level to FIDE category 18. Carlsen was happy: the opponents were of those who themselves play and allow others to play. It seemed the right time to play fighting chess, but he was continuing to work on his own game, and in Biel we saw a self-confident 'technician'. Magnus happily exchanged the queens, relying on his greatly improved endgame technique, as he demonstrated in the very first round in this game with Bu Xiangzhi. He was not concerned by the protracted nature of the battle (the conversion of a positional advantage with opposite-colour bishops and rooks took 50 moves). The tournament went well, and three rounds before the end Carlsen was leading by a margin of one point. It seemed that victory was assured. But at that moment he committed a childish error, inadmissible for a 17-year-old grandmaster.

**M. Carlsen – Y. Pelletier**

Biel 2007



After the natural 16. f3 White is slightly better, but that is all. But Magnus played **16. ♖xh7??** (one can't help remembering the first game of the 1972 Spassky–Fischer match), and after the natural reply **16...f5 17. e4 ♗g7 18. exf5 ♖xh7 19. fxex6 fxe6** he was a piece down for obviously inadequate compensation.

What was the cause of such inexcusably cavalier play? Perhaps he was seeking revenge for the miniature in his first tournament in Biel 2005, which he lost to Pelletier in the opening (1. d4 ♖f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♖c3 ♖b4 4. ♗c2 d5 5. cxd5 c5 6. dxc5 ♖xd5 7. ♕d2 ♕xc5 8. ♖xd5 ♗xd5 9. e4 ♗d4 10. 0–0–0 ♖d7 11. ♖b5 0–0?? 12. ♕c3, and Black lost a piece). On the principle – it depends who you are playing!

This childishness cost him dearly. As it is said, misfortunes do not come singly. Through inertia Carlsen lost his next game to van Wely and allowed himself to be passed by Radjabov, whom he had to play in the last round. All that remained was to display his character and win 'to order', and although he did this, Magnus was caught by Onischuk. They had to play a blitz tie-break for

the first prize. They fought to the last: with a score of 2–2 things came down to an 'Armageddon' (draw in favour of Black, but he has 4 minutes on the clock). And Carlsen again displayed his character. He won the game with Black, and moreover he won 'on class'. Passions died down – Magnus had won his first super-tournament.

Game 26

M. Carlsen – A. Onischuk

Biel 2007

*Queen's Gambit [D43]***1. d4 ♖f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♖f3 d5 4. ♕g5**

By a non-traditional way the game has entered the currently popular Moscow Variation, the classical route to which lies via the Queen's Gambit (1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. ♖f3 ♖f6 4. ♕g5). The variation received this name after the famous Moscow International Tournament of 1925, where it was employed by Emanuel Lasker and Efim Bogoljubow.

4...h6 5. ♕xf6

A popular continuation. Those who like sharp play prefer to test their strength (and home preparation!) in the so-called Anti-Moscow Variation 5. ♕h4 c6 6. ♖c3 dxc4. As for Carlsen, he prefers clearer play.

5...♗xf6 6. ♖c3 c6 7. ♗b3

Along with 7. ♗c2, one of the main continuations in the Moscow Variation.

7...dxc4

Another branch 7...♖d7 8. e4 dxe4 9. ♖xe4 ♗f4 10. ♕d3 e5 11. 0–0 has been known



since the time of the 1938 AVRO Tournament.



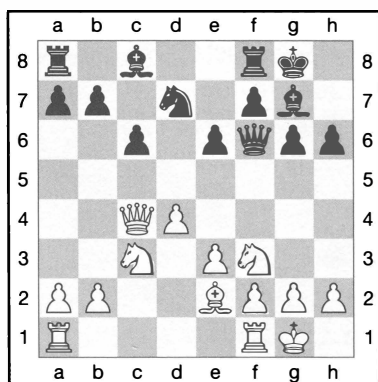
Analysis diagram

The Euwe–Fine game continued 11...♙e7 12. ♖fe1 exd4 13. ♜xd4 0–0 14. ♙c2 ♜f6 (nowadays the more forceful 14...♜c5 15. ♚c3 ♜d8 is preferred, with equal play) 15. ♜ad1 g6 16. ♜xf6+?! (16. ♚c3!?) 16...♙xf6 17. ♜e4 ♚c7 18. ♚e3 ♜g7 19. h4 h5 20. ♜f4 ♜e8! 21. ♚xe8 ♚xf4 22. ♜f3 ♜b8 23. ♚e4 ♚xe4 24. ♙xe4 ♙g4, and Black won the endgame in excellent style.

The modern sharp continuation 11...exd4 underwent a severe testing in the game Mamedyarov–Topalov (Sofia 2007), where Shakhriyar made use of a recommendation by Jan Timman, that had not come to the attention of the ex-world champion – 12. ♜xd4!, after which castling is not possible – 12...♙e7 13. ♜f5!. The game continued 12...♜c5 13. ♜xc5 ♙xc5 14. ♜ae1+ ♜f8 15. ♜e4 ♚f6 16. ♚c3 a5?! (16...♙d7!? 17. b4 ♙xd4 18. ♜xd4 ♜e8 – Stohl) 17. ♜fe1 ♙d7 18. ♜1e3 ♙b4 19. ♚c2 ♚d6 20. ♜f3 h5 21. c5! ♙xc5 22. ♙c4 f6 23. ♜e6+ ♙xe6 24. ♜xe6, and White soon won.

**8. ♚xc4 ♜d7 9. e3 g6 10. ♙e2 ♙g7
11. 0–0 0–0**

(see next diagram)



12. ♜fd1 e5

Carlsen thinks that the preparatory 12...♚e7!? is more accurate.

13. ♜e4

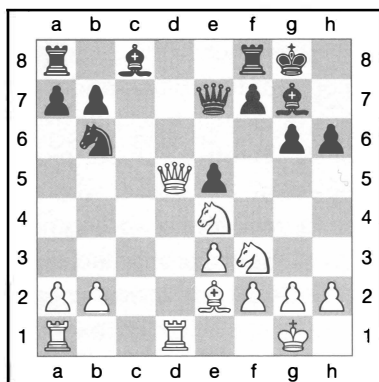
Black is seriously behind in the development of his queenside, and White's play involves exploiting the weakness of the d6-square for the invasion of his knight.

13...♚e7?!

Here this move does not oppose White's plan, since it allows a favourable breakthrough in the centre. As Carlsen shows in his comments on the game, the problem would have been solved by the paradoxical move 13...♚f5!. This seems strange – the queen invites the knight to go to d6 with gain of tempo, but the subtle point is that Black forces the exchange on e5 and neutralises the danger: 14. ♜d6 ♚f6 15. dxe5 ♜xe5 16. ♜xe5 ♚xe5 17. ♚b4 ♙e6, and 18. ♚xb7?! is risky because of 18...♙d5.

14. d5 cxd5 15. ♚xd5 ♜b6

The alternative 15...♜f6 16. ♚d6 ♚xd6 17. ♜xd6 would also have left White with a favourable endgame.



16. ♖xc5!

One cannot help but be amazed at the pragmatism of the young grandmaster. If the position demands it, Carlsen is prepared to try and squeeze out a minimal advantage, even in an obviously protracted endgame.

16...♗xc5 17. ♘xc5 ♕g4

White's control of the d-file combined with the pressure of his knight on the b7-pawn creates problems for Black over the development of his light-square bishop. Onischuk's decision to sacrifice the pawn for the sake of disclosing the potential of his bishop pair seems a fully objective one. If he defends the pawn by 17...♖b8, after 18. ♖ac1 the problems of developing the bishop are not relieved: if 18...♕f5 there is 19. ♘h4, while if 18...♕g4 – 19. h3.

18. h3

For the moment 18. ♘xb7 does not work because of 18...e4.

18...♖ac8

Black has gained an important tempo to secure an excellent post for his bishop at e6.

19. ♘xb7

White must accept the pawn sacrifice, since after 19. ♖ac1 e4 20. h×g4 exf3 21. ♕xf3 ♕xb2 22. ♖b1 ♖xc5 23. ♖xb2 ♖c7 he cannot hope for anything.

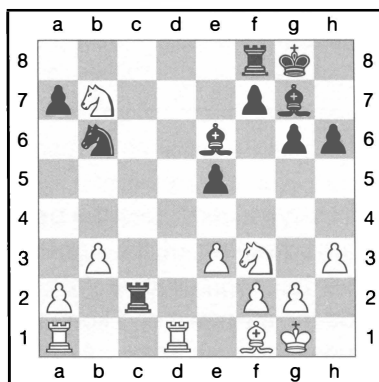
19...♕e6

The pair of long-range bishops supported by the rook put the queenside under concerted fire, forcing White onto the defensive.

20. b3

White cannot get by without this move, 20. ♖d2 is too passive: 20...♖c7 21. ♘a5 (21. ♘d6 ♖d8) 21...♖fc8 22. ♖ad1 ♖c2, while after a move by the knight – 20. ♘d6 the potential of the black pieces is fully revealed: 20...♖c2 21. ♖d2 ♖xd2 22. ♘xd2 ♖d8 23. ♘d2c4 e4 24. ♖b1 f5, and again 25. b3 cannot be avoided.

20...♖c2 21. ♕f1



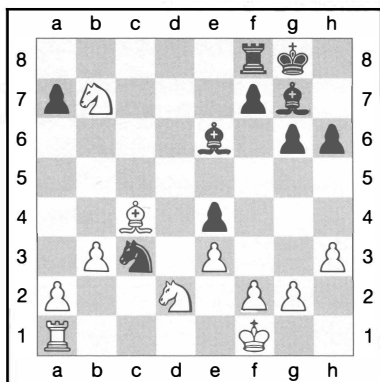
21...♘d5

Black is at the cross-roads: should he continue his active course, which Onischuk settles for, by playing his knight to c3, or limit himself to waiting tactics? For example, 21...♕d5 22. ♘d6 ♖c6 23. ♘b5



a6 is possible, driving the knight to the edge of the board (24. ♖a3). But what to do next? 24...e4 is only a half-measure: 25. ♘d4 ♗c5 26. ♗ac1 and White nevertheless transfers his knight to c4 – 26...♗fc8 (or 26...♗a5 27. ♘c4 ♗xc4 28. bxc4 ♗xa2 29. c5 ♘c8 30. ♗a1, winning the a6-pawn) 27. ♗xc5 ♗xc5 28. ♘c4!, and Black is unable to regain the pawn. If 24...a5 White replies 25. ♘d2 e4 (25...a4 26. ♗b5) 26. ♗ab1 ♗a8 27. ♘ac4, stabilising the a3-knight.

22. ♗c4 ♘c3 23. ♗d2 ♗xd2 24. ♘xd2 e4 25. ♗f1



25...♗b8

Alexey Korotylev considers the best plan to be the switching of the light-square bishop to the long diagonal, from where it defends the e4-pawn and keeps an eye on the queenside pawns: 25...♗d7!? 26. a4 ♗c6 27. ♘d6 ♗e5 28. ♗c1 ♗xd6 29. ♗xc3 ♗b4 30. ♗c2 ♗d8, and the a4/b3 pawn pair is securely blockaded. It should be added that the attempt to advance the b-pawn – 26. ♘c5 ♗c6 27. b4 – is parried by 27...♗d8 28. ♗e1 a5! 29. bxa5 ♘a4. Now, however, Carlsen confidently finds the key to Black's defences.

26. ♘c5 ♗xc4+?

It would appear that Black no longer had any choice, other than to win the exchange: 26...♘a4 27. ♘xe6 ♗xa1 28. bxa4 fxe6 29. ♗xe6+ ♔g7 30. ♘xe4, where White would be faced with converting his compact pawn mass in a protracted endgame. But, at the least, this was a practical chance, whereas with the exchange of the light-square bishops the potential of the extra pawn increases sharply.

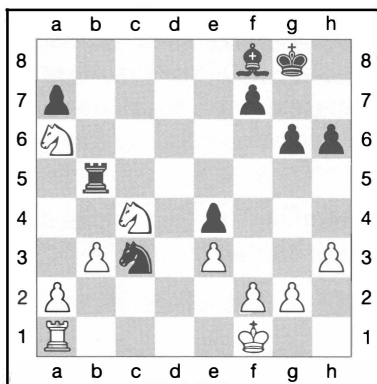
27. ♘xc4 ♗b5

Apparently Onischuk was pinning his hopes on this move, thinking that after the knight moves to a6 it will be out of play. After 27...♘a4 White can interpose 28. ♘a6.

28. ♘a6!

This knight is destined to discredit the rule of Siegbert Tarrasch, that a knight on the edge of the board always stands badly. In the given specific position the white knights are excellently coordinated, restricting the rook, which looks longingly at the c6-square.

28...♗f8



29. b4!

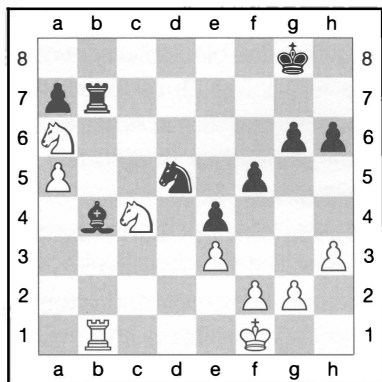


And here is the key to the position. By sacrificing a pawn, White completely ties down the black pieces.

**29...♙xb4 30. a4 ♖b7 31. ♖c1 ♜d5
32. ♖b1 f5**

Against the attempt to unravel with a 'reverse' pin, White has a choice between two winning endgames: 32...♖e7 33. ♜xb4 ♖b7 34. ♜xd5 ♖xb1+ 35. ♙e2 and 34. ♜d6 ♖xb4 35. ♖xb4 ♜xb4 36. ♜xe4.

33. a5!



The domination of the white knights over the black rook is impressive! By taking away the b6-square, White puts Black in zugzwang. Carlsen confirms this with the following variations: 33...♖e7 34. ♜xb4 ♖b7 35. ♜b6!, or 33...♖b5 34. g3! with the threat of 35. ♜d6 (after the immediate 34. ♜d6 ♖xa5 35. ♜xb4 ♜xb4 36. ♖xb4 ♖a1+ White has to give up his f2-pawn). The performance is finished. The curtain can be lowered.

**33...♙g7 34. ♜e5 f4 35. exf4 e3
36. fxex3 ♜xe3+ 37. ♙g1 ♜d5 38. ♙h1
♖b5 39. ♜c6**

Black lost on time.

Game 27

M. Carlsen – T. Radjabov

Biel 2007

Irregular Opening [B07]

1. e4 d6

Despite the fact that in the last round Carlsen was more highly motivated (to overtake Radjabov, he had to win the game), his opponent was by no means in a peaceable mood. This is also indicated by the choice of opening. It should be mentioned that Radjabov (as also Carlsen) is no respecter of reputations, and he is one of the few who plays for a win with both colours. It is worth remembering Teimour's win, at the age of 16, over the great Garry Kasparov in Linares 2003. With the black pieces, moreover! It is sufficient to say that Teimour's main weapon against 1. d4 is the King's Indian Defence, in which he has gained numerous wins.

2. d4 ♜f6 3. ♜c3 e5

A curious psychological moment. It turns out that Radjabov was only 'scaring' Carlsen with the Pirc-Ufimtsev Defence; he does not intend to fianchetto his bishop, and he invites a transposition into the Philidor Defence. He is not afraid of the exchange of queens, realising that in view of the tournament situation Carlsen will not go in for it.

4. ♜ge2

Magnus prefers something different, which has no name in opening classification. The transposition into the Philidor Defence could have occurred after 4. ♜f3 ♜bd7.

4...♜bd7

Carlsen thinks that the development of the bishops was more in the spirit of the



position – 4...♔e7 5. g3 ♖g4 6. ♔g2 exd4 7. ♜xd4 ♘c6.

5. g3 c6 6. ♔g2

It was possible to forestall the pawn initiative on the queenside by 6. a4.

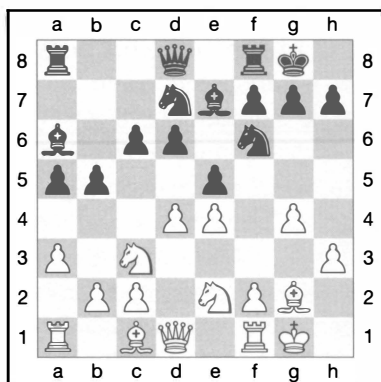
6...b5 7. a3 ♔e7 8. 0–0 0–0 9. h3 a5

In the rapid game Grischuk–Fridman (Mainz 2006) Black included his pawn in the attack only after developing his bishop: 9...♔b7 10. g4 a5, but after 11. ♘g3 exd4 12. ♜xd4 c5 13. ♜d1 b4 14. ♘b5!? ♔a6 15. a4 it transpired that the d6-pawn required defending. The game continued 15...g6?! (15...♘e8) 16. ♔h6 ♖e8 17. g5 ♘h5 18. ♘h5 gxh5 19. ♜xh5 ♜b6 20. f4 c4+ 21. ♖h1 ♖ac8 22. f5 ♘e5 23. f6 ♔d8 24. ♔f8 1–0.

10. g4

It is natural to try and take the lead in the flank attacks, although in his comments on the game Carlsen considered this to be not the optimal decision, without, however, suggesting anything instead.

10...♔a6



11. ♘g3

A provocative move, since it allows the opening of the position. In his game with Mokry (European Team Championship,

Haifa 1989) Beliavsky preferred to restrict Black on the queenside in 'Spanish' style – 11. b4. The game continued 11...♔b7 12. ♖b1 axb4 13. axb4 ♘e8 14. ♘g3 g6 15. ♔h6 ♘g7 16. ♘ce2 ♘b6 17. f4 exf4 18. ♘xf4 ♔g5?! (18...♘c4! was more logical) 19. ♔xg5 ♜xg5 20. e5 dxe5 21. ♘e4 ♜e7 22. dxe5 ♜xe5 23. ♜d6! and White developed a dangerous initiative.

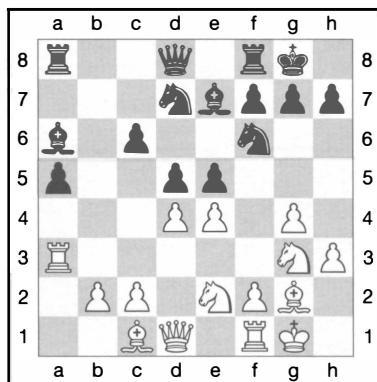
11...b4?!

One can only try and guess why Radjabov did not go in for the favourable opening of the position: 11...exd4 12. ♜xd4 b4 13. ♘ce2 bxa3 14. ♖xa3 (14. bxa3? ♘xg4!) 14...d5, where the black pieces would have become very active. But subsequently too his play raises questions. Apparently it was one of those days for Radjabov.

12. ♘ce2 bxa3

By beginning with 12...d5 13. exd5 ♘xd5, Black would not have allowed the activation of the queen's rook and after 14. ♖e1 he would have achieved an equal game: 14...bxa3 15. bxa3 ♔f6.

13. ♖xa3 d5



14. ♖e3!

This shows a deep understanding of the position! The rook manoeuvre to the centre, involving the doubling of rooks on the e-file, forces Black to release the pawn tension.



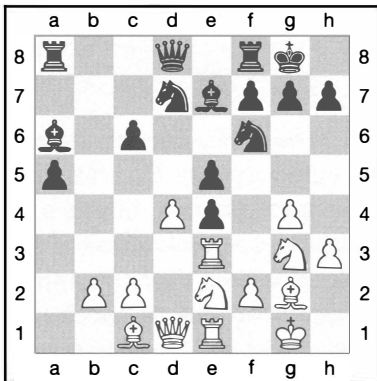
This leads to the opening of the position, making it easier for White to attack on the kingside.

14...dxe4

Black is forced to concede the centre. He vacates the d5-square for his knight, hoping to drive away the rook, but disillusionment awaits him. The alternative 14...exd4 15. ♖xd4 ♙c5 (15...♙xf1? 16. ♖xc6 ♜e8 17. exd5 leads to the loss of a piece) 16. ♜fe1 ♜b6 (weaker is 16...♙xd4 17. ♜xd4 c5 18. ♜a4 d4 19. ♙a3 with an attack on the weak pawns) 17. c3 had its drawbacks, but at least Black would have activated his bishops.

15. ♙e1!

The rook moves out of the pin and the illusions associated with 15...♖d5 prove unfounded in view of 16. ♙xe4. Unexpectedly it transpires that the black pieces are mobilised far worse for the forthcoming play.



15...♙c7

Not an easy choice. The inclusion of the exchange 15...exd4 16. ♖xd4 ♙c7 sharply activates the opponent's pieces: 17. g5 ♖d5 18. ♙xe4 ♙c5 19. ♖gf5 ♙b6 (if 19...a4 there follows 20. ♙h5 ♙fd8 21. c4! ♙xc4 22. ♖xg7!) 20. ♙h5 ♙fd8 (or 20...♙xd4 21. ♖xd4 g6 22. ♙h6 ♙fd8 23. b3! with the decisive threats of ♙b2 and ♙h4) 21. b3

♖f8 22. ♙b2 ♖g6 23. ♖xg7! ♖df4 24. ♖df5 ♖xh5 25. ♖xh5 with a decisive attack.

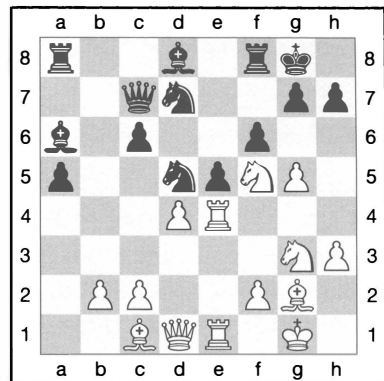
15...h5, a move considered by Carlsen, also looks irrational, since it contradicts a classical rule: don't move pawns on the wing where you are weaker. After 16. g×h5! (16. g5 ♖d5 17. ♙xe4 ♙xg5 18. dxe5 ♖c5 would suit Black) 16...♖d5 17. ♙xe4 f5 18. ♙xe5 ♖xe5 19. dxe5 White has more than sufficient compensation for the exchange (♙xd5 and ♖f4 is threatened).

Possibly the best solution to the situation could have been 15...♙e8.

16. ♖f5 ♙d8?

The bishop retreat conclusively disrupts the already poor coordination of the black pieces, dividing them into two camps. 16...♙fe8 answers better the demands of the defence.

17. g5 ♖d5 18. ♙xe4 f6 19. ♖eg3



19...g6

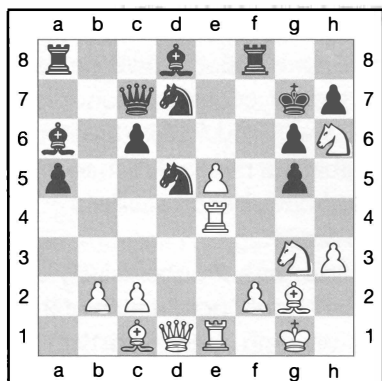
It is already hard to offer Black any good advice, since the white pieces are arriving on the kingside as though by schedule. To illustrate this we give two possible variations: 19...♙f7 20. ♙g4 ♖e7 21. b3 ♖g6 22. ♙a3 or 19...♖e7 20. g×f6 ♖x5 21. ♖x5 ♙x6 22. dxe5 ♖xe5 23. ♙f4. In both cases White's advantage is obvious.

20. ♖h6+ ♙g7



If 20...♔h8 there could have followed 21. gxf6 (21. dxe5 fxe5 22. ♖g4 is also good) 21...♙xf6 22. ♖g4 ♙g7 23. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 24. dxe5 with an extra pawn.

21. dxe5 f×g5



22. e6!

The decisive breakthrough. White clears the approaches to the black king.

22...♙×h6

If 22...♖7f6 there also follows 23. e7! ♙xe7 24. ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 25. ♖xe7 ♗xe7 26. ♖hf5+.

23. e7! ♗b6

The capture of the pawn leads to a mating attack: 23...♖xe7 24. ♖xe7 ♙xe7 25. ♖xe7 ♖ad8 26. ♗d4 ♖f6 27. ♗h4#.

24. exf8♗+ ♖×f8 25. c4 ♖f4 26. ♗d6 ♙g7 27. ♙xf4 g×f4 28. ♖e7+

Black resigned.

An important landmark in Carlsen's self-assertion was his participation in the second Mikhail Tal Memorial Tournament (FIDE category 20). On this occasion Carlsen arrived in Moscow not as a timid pupil, like a year earlier, but as a fighter, tested in battle with elite grandmasters. However, he did not manage to take part in the battle for the first prize. Kramnik was untouchable. After the 14th world champion had passed on his 'ruling authority' to Anand, he played freely and over the short distance of 9 rounds he scored +4, finishing 1½ points ahead of the second-placed Shirov. But Carlsen's share of 3rd–5th places with Peter Leko and Dmitry Jakovenko also showed that he had effectively established himself in the upper echelon.

Playing in Moscow against a large group of successors of the famous Soviet Chess School is always a serious test. Especially when you begin the tournament with a game against Kramnik, and the fact that in Moscow the 14th world champion always plays with particular commitment and is always aiming to win. The intrigue was increased by the fact that, in their previous meeting in the summer of that year in Dortmund, Carlsen had suffered a disaster in the Catalan Opening. The opening was predictable.



Game 28

V. Kramnik – M. Carlsen

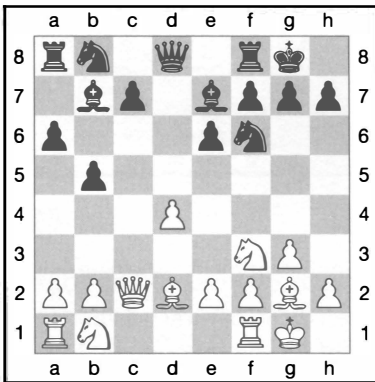
Moscow 2007

*Catalan Opening [E05]***1. ♖f3 ♗f6 2. c4**

Kramnik's favourite way of reaching the Catalan.

**2...e6 3. g3 d5 4. d4 ♗e7 5. ♗g2 0–0
6. 0–0 dxc4 7. ♖c2 a6 8. ♖xc4 b5
9. ♖c2 ♗b7 10. ♗d2**

White is intending to place his bishop on a5, to prevent the freeing advance ...c7–c5.

**10...♗d6**

Carlsen's home preparation. Black vacates the e7-square for his queen, when the ♗a5 thrust becomes irrelevant. Up till here the two players had move for move repeated their game in Dortmund, which continued 10...♗c6 11. e3 ♗b4 12. ♗xb4 ♗xb4 13. a3 ♗e7 14. ♗bd2 ♖c8 15. b4 a5 16. ♗e5! (apparently this move came as a surprise to Carlsen, who was being guided by the game Bruzon–Capo Vidal, Morelia 2007, which went 16. ♖b2 axb4 17. axb4 ♖d6 18. ♖fb1 ♗a8 with good play for Black) 16...♗d5? (Black should have exchanged bishops – 16...♗xg2 17. ♗xg2, but he is al-

ready in a positional trap: 17...c6 18. ♗d3 or 17...axb4 18. ♗c6 ♖d7 19. axb4 is equally unpleasant) 17. ♗b3!. The culmination of White's strategy – he achieves a complete blockade of the queenside. After 17...axb4 18. ♗a5 ♗a8 19. ♗ac6 ♗xc6 20. ♗xc6 ♖d7 21. ♗xd5! exd5 22. axb4 Black was completely paralysed and the b5-pawn was doomed.

11. ♗g5 ♗bd7 12. ♗bd2 ♖c8 13. ♗b3 c5

Thus Black has carried out his plan, but has associated it with a new idea.

14. ♗xf6 ♗xf6!?

This is Carlsen's genuine novelty. He sacrifices a pawn. In the only previous game on this theme, Hofman–Browne (Bad Wiessee 1998), Black played 14...♖xf6 15. ♗e5 cxd4 16. ♗xd7, after which White did not tempt fate and he offered a draw.

*Analysis diagram*

What was it that Carlsen did not like here? Sergey Shipov suggests the following variation: 16...♖d8 17. ♗bc5 ♗xg2 18. ♗xf8 ♗xf1 19. ♖xh7+ ♗xf8 20. ♗b7 ♖d7 21. ♗xd6 ♖c6 22. ♗xf7 ♗xf7 23. ♖xf1, and White wins a pawn. But 21...♖xd6 22. ♖h8+ ♗e7 23. ♖xc8 ♗xe2 must also be considered. White is the exchange up, but the d4-pawn, supported by the bishop, is a real force. In addition the white king is a concern. Let us consider a possible



continuation: 24. Bc1 Qf6! (out of harm's way!) 25. Bc7 (25. Wc7 $\text{We5!?$) 25... Wb4 26. Qg2 We1 27. Bc1 Wd2 28. Bc5 Qd3 29. Wb7 Qg6 and Black is alright. But these and other variations remained off-screen, since the two players continued playing at high speed, demonstrating confidence in their home preparation.

15. Qxc5

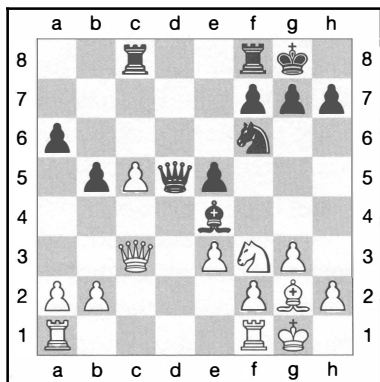
If 15. dxc5 , then 15... Qe4! is good.

15... Qe4 16. Wc3 e5!

For the sacrificed pawn Black has developed great activity. For example, bad for White is 17. Qxe5 Qxg2 18. Qxg2 Qxe5 19. dxe5 Qe4 when he has to give up his queen.

17. e3 Qxc5 18. dxc5 Wd5

It was only now that Kramnik stopped to think. And he had plenty to ponder. Black has successfully solved his opening problems.



19. Bd1 W a8

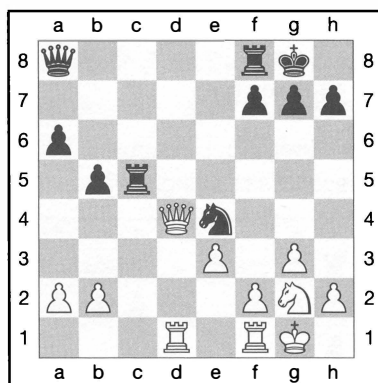
19... Wb7 was more active, but Carlsen only took into account the nuances known to him with the defence of the back rank.

20. Qh4 Qxg2 21. Qxg2 Qe4

As Pushkin said: 'One dawn to replace another hastens'. Now White has to watch out for the possible manoeuvre ... Qe4-g5-f3 .

22. Wxe5 Bxc5 23. Wd4

If 23. Wf4 possible is 23... Qg5 24. Qh1 h6 followed by the invasion of the rook on the 2nd rank.



23... Bc4!

A multi-purpose move. The rook drives the queen off its central position and frees the knight for the manoeuvre to f3. In the event of 23... Bc2 24. Qf4 (after 24. Qe1 Bxe2 25. Qf3 h6 26. a3 Bc8 the black pieces occupy their optimally active positions) 24... Qg5 25. Wd5 Qf3+ (weaker is 25... Wxd5 26. Bxd5 Qf3+ 27. Qg2 Qd2 28. Bxe1 with the threat of the Bxe2 pin, while after 28... Bxb2 29. Qd3! Bb1 30. Bxb1 Qxb1 31. Qb4 White again obtains an extra pawn) 26. Qg2 Black has either to withdraw his knight or work out the consequences of the mutual pin after 26... Qd2 27. Wxa8 Bxa8 28. Bfe1 Bd8 .

24. Wd3

After 24. We5 , apart from the trivial 24... Bxc5 , there are also other possibilities. Black undoubtedly has full compensation

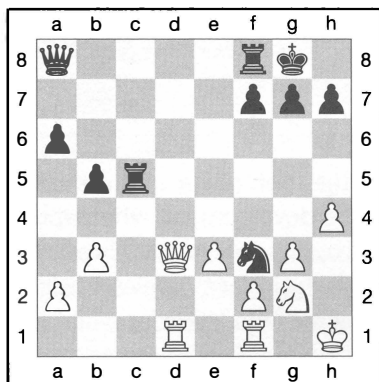


for the pawn, although it is sufficient only to maintain the balance, not more.

24...♘g5 25. b3 ♝c5 26. h4

To avoid standing for ever under the threat of the check on f3.

26...♙f3+ 27. ♖h1



27...♞c8

How can one refrain from threatening mate on h3? But Black's position is so good, that he does not need to hurry. For example, he could first have developed his rook – 27...♞e8, opened an escape square for his king with ...h7–h6, and then taken a decision.

28. ♙f4 ♞g4!

Otherwise with ♙g2 White will drive away the knight.

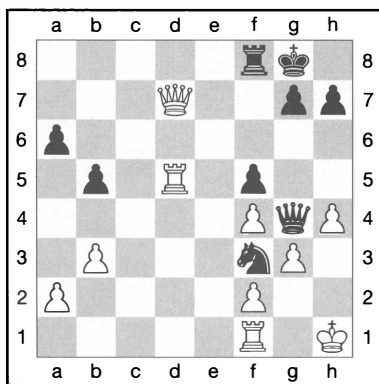
29. ♞d7 ♞f5!

Magnus's motto is 'only forward'! The exchange sacrifice on f4 is now on the agenda. Kramnik has to find a way to save himself.

30. ♞d5 ♞x4 31. ex4 f5

Again mate on h3 is threatened. The only

way to save the game is by a counter-sacrifice of a rook.



32. ♞e6+ ♖h8 33. ♞x5!

Exploiting the absence of an escape square for the king, White exchanges the queens.

33...♞x5 34. ♞x5 ♞x5 35. ♞d1 g5

Black cannot get away with half-measures – 35...g6 36. ♙g2.

36. h×g5 ♙xg5 37. f×g5 ♞x2 38. a4 b×a4 39. b×a4 ♞a2 40. ♞d4

Draw.

The tempo play in the final stage of the game is impressive. The two players proved worthy of each other. Even so, there was a small 'plus' for Carlsen, even if only a moral one – in his opening preparation he surpassed none other than Kramnik.

Game 29

D. Jakovenko – M. Carlsen

Moscow 2007

Nimzo-Indian Defence [E20]

1. d4 ♙f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♙c3 ♙b4 4. ♙f3

White goes in for the Romanishin Variation with the fianchetto of the bishop. The main



continuations are 4. e3 and 4. ♖c2.

4...c5 5. g3 cxd4 6. ♖xd4 0-0 7. ♔g2 d5 8. cxd5 ♖xd5 9. ♗b3



A universal move in this type of position. White counters the pin on the knight and attacks the d5-point.

9...♗a5

9...♗b6 is weaker in view of 10. ♔xd5 exd5 11. ♔e3. 9...♖c6 10. ♖xc6 bxc6 11. 0-0 ♗a5 12. ♔d2 leads to a transposition of moves.

10. ♔d2 ♖c6 11. ♖xc6 bxc6 12. 0-0 ♔xc3 13. bxc3

After the exchange of the bishop 13. ♔xc3 ♖xc3 14. bxc3 ♔a6 Black easily equalises. For example, the game Moiseenko–Zugic (Toronto 2003) continued 15. ♗b4 ♗xb4 16. cxb4 ♖ab8 17. a3 ♔xe2 18. ♖fc1 ♖fc8 19. ♔xc6 ♖f8 20. f4 ♖e7 21. ♖f2 ♔a6 ½–½.

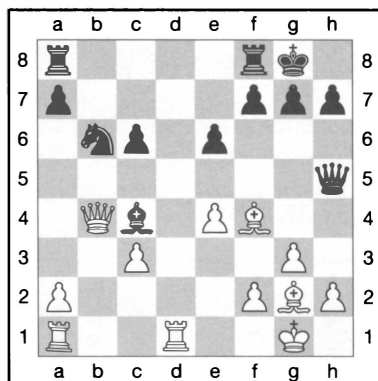
13...♔a6 14. ♖fd1 ♗c5

Preventing c3–c4, which is possible after 14...♔xe2.

15. e4 ♔c4 16. ♗a4 ♖b6 17. ♗b4 ♗h5

Nothing is given by 17...♗xb4 18. cxb4 ♖fd8.

18. ♔f4



This battle took place at the peak of the variation's development, where much was decided by nuances, since this position was studied at the highest level. And although it is considered favourable for White, who has the two bishops, Black's resources are also quite considerable: his light-square bishop can be included in the fight for the d-file and in the play on the kingside. True, there are also drawbacks: Black's queenside pawns are in need of defence.

White began developing his bishop at f4 after a detailed investigation had been made of 18. ♔e3, putting the queenside under attack. After Black carried out his main idea of exploiting the weakness of the light squares: 18...♔e2 19. ♖e1 (19. ♖d2 ♖ab8, Kasparov–Anand, Wijk aan Zee 2000) 19...♖c4 20. ♗c5 ♖fd8 21. e5?! (21. h3!?) 21...♖b2! 22. ♗xc6 ♖d3, where he achieved the better game (Bacrot–Grischuk, Cap d'Agde 2003), interest in the move 18. ♔e3 fell away.

18...c5

Black is at the parting of the ways: should he drive back the queen or the bishop? Carlsen begins by driving back the queen, but in so doing he takes into account the



experience of the game Grischuk–Gelfand (World Championship, Mexico 2007), where Black included 18...♙e2 19. ♖e1 and wanted both the one and the other – 19...c5 20. ♗b3 e5, expecting 21. ♙e3 ♖c4. But there followed 21. ♙c1!, when Black faced an unpleasant white initiative on the queenside: 21...♗ac8 22. a4 ♙c4 23. ♗b2 ♗g6 24. a5 ♖d7 25. ♗d1 ♗c6 26. ♙h3 ♙e6 27. ♙xe6 ♗xe6 28. ♙e3 ♗c7 29. ♗a2! (the exchange of queens guarantees White control of both the open files, d and b) 29...♗xa2 30. ♗xa2 ♖f6 31. f3, and White obtained clearly the better endgame.

The alternative 18...e5 allows White to attack the c6-pawn. For example, the game Najer–Jakovenko (Moscow 2006) continued 19. ♙e3 ♙e2 20. ♖e1 ♖c4 21. ♗c5 ♗fd8 22. ♗ab1 h6 23. h3! ♖xe3 24. ♗xe3 ♙c4 25. a4 a5 26. ♗c5 ♙e6 27. h4 ♗d2!, where for the pawn Black gained good counterplay. But it is quite possible that White's play can be improved.

19. ♗b2

A month later at the 2007 World Cup in Khanty-Mansiysk, Cheparinov in his game with Carlsen made an attempt to improve White's play with 19. ♗a5. The game continued 19...e5 20. ♙e3 ♙e2 21. ♖e1 ♖c4 22. ♗a6 ♖xe3 23. ♗xe2 ♖xg2 24. ♖xg2 and, despite the symmetry of the pawn weaknesses on the queenside, the black pawns proved more vulnerable.

19...♗ad8

A more natural continuation than 19...e5?!, which makes the defence of the c5-pawn more difficult. For example, the game Bacrot–Grischuk (Poikovsky 2005) con-

tinued 20. ♙e3 ♗fc8 21. f3 ♗g6 22. a4 a5 23. ♙h3 ♙e6? (after 23...♗cb8 24. ♗a3 ♙e2! Black would have had counterplay) 24. ♗xb6 ♙xh3 25. ♗xg6 f×g6 (after 25...h×g6 26. g4 f5 27. ♗d5 f×g4 28. f×g4 ♙xg4 29. ♙xc5 all the black pawns are weak) 26. ♖f2, and White achieved clearly the better endgame.

20. ♖e1

A dubious decision to concede the d-file, not supported subsequently by any idea. 20. f3 came into consideration, but blocking the diagonal of his bishop apparently did not come into White's plans.

20...♗d7

Carlsen's ability to place his pieces on their best squares characterises him as an adherent of the classical style of play. Black prepares the doubling of his rooks, at the same time defending the a7-pawn, and leaves open the possibility of including the second rook in the defence of the c5-pawn in the event of ♗a3.

21. h3

White has to reckon with the threat of a rook invasion of the second rank, and in the event of this he prepares g3–g4.

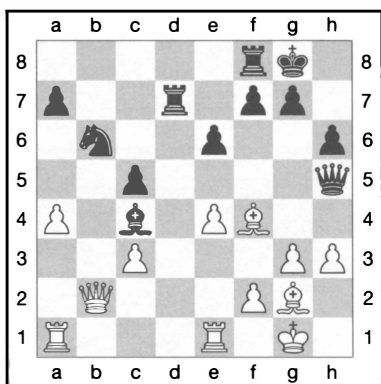
21...h6

Carlsen also makes a useful waiting move, leaving open the possibility of ...♗c8 in the event of ♗a3.

22. a4

(see next diagram)

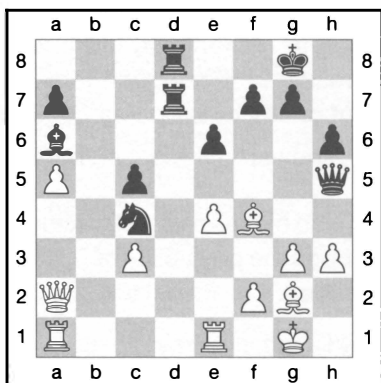
A pointless advance in the given situation, since an attack on the queenside is not a reality.

**22...♙a6!**

A subtle move. The bishop vacates an important square for the knight, without blocking the d-file, which could have occurred after 22...♙d3.

23. ♚a2

This prophylactic queen move in the event of ...♘c4 indicates that Jakovenko has reconciled himself to waiting tactics. It was more logical to return the rook to the d-file by playing 23. g4 ♚h4 24. ♙ed1.

23...♙fd8 24. a5 ♘c4**25. ♙f1**

White could have parried the threat of 25...e5 with the radical 25. e5, which Carlsen

was intending to answer with 25...g5!. Now if 26. ♙c1? there follows a rook invasion – 26...♙d1 27. ♙a3 ♙xe1+ 28. ♙xe1 ♙d1 29. ♙xd1 ♚xd1+ 30. ♘h2 ♚a4 and the queenside comes under attack by Black, and after 31. ♙f1 ♙b7! 32. ♙xc4 ♚d1 the kingside also collapses. White has to throw caution to the winds: 26. g4 ♚g6 27. ♙e4 ♚g7 28. ♙g3 ♘d2, but the initiative remains with Black.

25...e5 26. g4

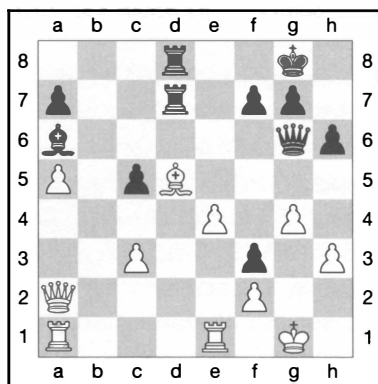
White loses after 26. ♙c1? ♙d1 27. g4 ♙xe1! 28. g×h5 ♙dd1, also picking up the bishop.

26...♚g6 27. ♙xc4 exf4!

Transposing into a heavy piece ending by 27...♙xc4 28. ♚xc4 exf4 29. ♚xc5 ♙d3 would have left White with counterplay – 30. ♚f5 ♙d6 31. e5 ♙d5 32. e6.

28. ♙d5 f3!

Fixing the kingside in anticipation of ...h6–h5.

**29. c4?**

It is naïve to hope to shelter behind the bishop, since Carlsen has already found the key to the enemy king. White should



have given up the exchange: 29. ♖e3 ♗e2! (29... ♖f6 30. c4 h5 31. e5 ♖h4 32. ♖xf3 leaves White with some hopes) 30. ♖xe2 fxe2 31. ♖xe2, when his active bishop gives compensation.

29...h5 30. ♖h2 ♖f6!

Black moves his queen closer to the king, keeping 'up his sleeve' a delayed-action mine. The g4-pawn will not run away, especially as after 30...hxg4 White would have defended with 31. ♖g1 ♖f6 32. ♖ad1! gxh3 33. ♖b3.

31. ♖g1?!

The rook on a1 should have been moved out of range of the queen – 31. ♖ad1, and after 31... ♖f4+ 32. ♖h1 hxg4 White can defend by 33. ♖g1 ♖h6 34. ♖g3 (variation by Shipov).

31...hxg4



The axe is raised! If 32. ♖xg4 Carlsen had prepared 32... ♗xc4!, and since 33. ♗xc4 is not possible on account of 33... ♖d2 34. ♖a4 ♖xf2+ 35. ♖g1 ♖fd2! with the irresistible threats of ... ♖d4+ and ... ♖e5–

h2, White has to accept the loss of the exchange – 33. ♖xc4 ♖xa1.

32. ♖ab1?

Jakovenko sensed the danger and moved his rook away, but to the wrong square. 32. ♖ad1, defending the bishop, was essential.

32... ♗xc4!

That's it! The fortress on d5 collapses, and the exposed king cannot withstand the attack by the heavy pieces.

33. ♖xc4

If 33. ♗xc4 Black decides matters with 33... ♖d2, when 34. ♗xf7+ fails to 34... ♖f8.

33... ♖f4+ 34. ♖g3 ♖xd5!

The e4-pawn is pinned, and all that remains for White is to sacrifice his queen for two rooks, since after 35. hxg4 ♖d1 there is no defence against ... ♖h6+ with a decisive invasion of the queen. White does not have sufficient compensation – this is not one of those cases where the rooks have operational scope.

35. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 36. exd5 c4

While the rook is pinned, the pawn swiftly advances towards the queening square.

37. ♖d1 c3 38. d6 c2 39. ♖d3 ♖c4!

One senses that Carlsen is savouring the position.

40. ♖e3 ♖c6 41. ♖d3 ♖c5!

White resigned.



After the Tal Memorial, how could he not play in the world blitz championship with the participation of the world champion Anand, which was held two days later there in Moscow, in the prestigious GUM building on Red Square? Carlsen battled selflessly in the double-round tournament with 20 participants, and finished in an honourable 9th place, with a score of 20½ points. Of course, 38 games with the strongest blitz players in the world was a severe strain, especially as two days later the World Cup was starting in Khanty-Mansiysk.

Carlsen could rightly consider himself a veteran of the knock-out system, he liked the fierce struggle in mini-matches, and he was improving tournament by tournament. We should remind you: in Tripoli 2004 Magnus went out in the first round, in Khanty-Mansiysk 2005 he reached the fourth, but in Khanty-Mansiysk 2007 he played six stages. 'The knock-out suits the young more than experienced players,' Carlsen was to say after the end of the tournament. 'In particular because it is easier for us to recover, and because nothing special is expected of us. Before the World Cup I didn't have many expectations. I wasn't afraid of anyone, but also I did not consider myself the favourite. I simply came along and played. It turned out well. I hope this will also continue in the future.'

The start was difficult, as fatigue told after the continuous marathon. The respite in the 'entry' match with the Australian Zhao Zong Yuan (2–0) was purely symbolic for Magnus, since his subsequent opponents did not allow him to relax. Much strength was used on a protracted endgame in the first game with Naiditsch, whom he managed to overcome only in the tie-break (3–1). Things took a difficult course in the match with Dominguez, who in the first game so zealously tried to spoil Magnus's birthday, that on this occasion too he was thinking about the tie-break. But the second game went well (1½–½), and subsequently his play improved. By the same score 1½–½ he won his mini-matches against Adams and Cheparinov.

Game 30

M. Carlsen – L. Dominguez

World Cup, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007

Sicilian Defence [B92]

1. e4 c5 2. ♖f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♖xd4
 ♜f6 5. ♜c3 a6 6. ♙e2 e5 7. ♜b3 ♙e7
 8. ♙g5

The pin on the knight is a natural reaction to 6...e5. By the threat of the exchange on f6 White discloses the weakness of the d5-point and the d6-pawn.

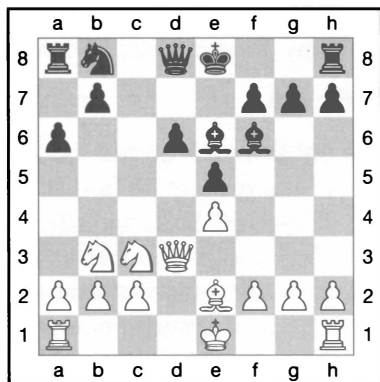
8...♙e6 9. ♙xf6 ♙xf6

The modern experience of the Sicilian Defence (and earlier – of the King's Indian Defence in the variation with ...♜b8–d7 and ...e5xd4) has shown that the weakness of the backward d6-pawn is fully compensated by Black's active piece play in the centre.

Black is not concerned about his d6-pawn being inadequately defended – he can support it by retreating his bishop to e7 or cover it with his knight from d4 after the exchange of the knight on b3.

10. ♖d3

(see next diagram)



10...♠g5

An original idea – Black prevents White's queenside castling. The classical continuation is considered to be 10...♠c6 11. 0–0–0 ♠e7 12. ♠b1 0–0 13. ♠d5 ♠g5. A characteristic game, for example, is Kramnik–Anand (Wijk aan Zee 2004), which continued 14. h4 ♠xh4 15. g3 ♠f6 16. ♣f3 ♠g5 17. ♣h5 h6 18. f4 ♠f6 19. ♠d2 ♠d4 20. ♠c4 ♠c8! 21. c3 ♠b5 22. f5 ♠xd5 23. ♠xd5 ♠xc3! 24. ♣g6! (or 24. bxc3 ♠xc3+ 25. ♠c2 ♠xd5! 26. exd5 ♣a5 27. ♣f3 ♠c8+ 28. ♠b1 ♠c3 with equal play) 24...♣b6 25. ♠xh6! and the players agreed a draw in view of perpetual check – 25...♠a3+ 26. ♠a1 ♠c2+ 27. ♠b1 ♠a3+.

The plan with control of the d5-point is also possible – 10...0–0 11. 0–0–0 ♠e7 12. ♠d5 ♠xd5 13. ♣xd5 ♣b6 14. ♠hf1 ♠d7 15. ♠b1 ♠f6.

11. ♠d1 ♠c6 12. a3

The variation with the win of a pawn – 12. ♣xd6 ♣xd6 13. ♠xd6 ♠e7 14. ♠d1 ♠b4 15. ♠d3 ♠ac8 16. 0–0 ♠hd8, where the activity of the black pieces guarantees full compensation – would undoubtedly be a bonus for the opponent.

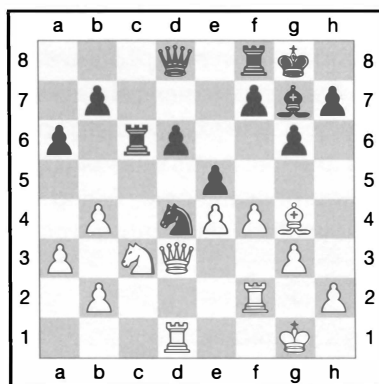
12...♠xb3 13. cxb3 ♠d4 14. b4 ♠c8

Black makes a seemingly useful waiting move; after 14...0–0 he was wrongly afraid of 15. h4, for the reason that White has insufficient resources to conduct an attack on the kingside. The variation 15. 0–0 g6 16. ♠g4 looks more real, with the idea of advancing the pawn to f5, since the 16...f5 counter has its drawbacks: 17. exf5 gxf5 18. ♠h3!? (18. ♠f3 ♣d7 19. ♠d5+ ♠h8 20. ♠e2 is also good) 18...♣d7 19. f4, and Black may have problems with the defence of his f5-pawn.

15. 0–0 0–0 16. ♠g4!

It is useful to retain this bishop, 'urging' the rook to go to c6 where, strangely enough, it proves to be out of play.

16...♠c6 17. g3 g6 18. f4 ♠h6 19. ♠f2 ♠g7



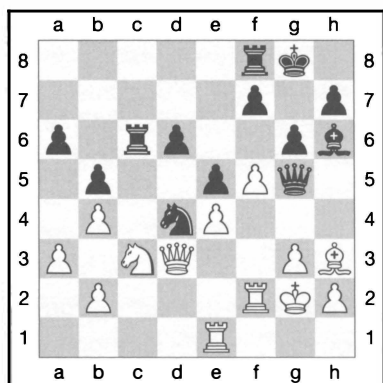
Somehow imperceptibly it has transpired that in this unpretentious manner Carlsen has outplayed his opponent. Despite the apparently active placing of the knight on d4 and the rook on the c-file, they are effectively out of play. At the same time the white pieces are ready for an offensive on the kingside, and it is not easy for Black to create counterplay.



20. f5! ♖g5 21. ♜h3 ♜h6

Intending to exploit the weakening of the dark squares by 22...♗e3.

22. ♞e1 b5 23. ♝g2



The temptation to drive in the pawn wedge 23. f6, constructing a kind of trap around the enemy queen, was very great. But then the position becomes closed and there is a protracted battle in prospect. At the same time, as Carlsen comments, he sensed that the opponent was experiencing some discomfort and that it was possible to await a more favourable outcome. Taking account of this, a useful waiting move was made.

23...♞a8?

Magnus's intuition did not let him down. Black is unable to find a sensible plan of defence, and he commits a mistake, leading to disaster. The idea of switching the rook via a8–a7–c7, in order to double rooks, looks rather abstract, since it requires too much time. In anticipation of ♜d5 he should have considered prophylaxis – 23...♝h8, but after 24. ♜d5 ♗d8 again looming up is the idea of the wedge f6 followed by the advance of the h-pawn. 23...♞c7 24. ♜d5 ♞a7 25. ♞ef1 is also too passive for Black.

It would appear that it is already hard to offer him any good advice.

24. f×g6 h×g6

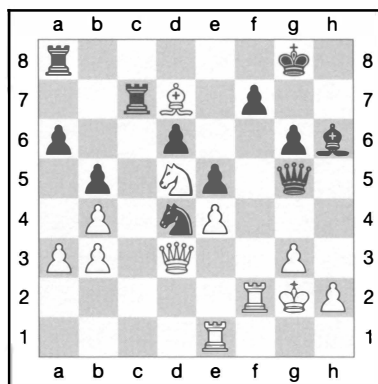
In the event of 24...f×g6 the unfortunate position of the rook at a8 is disclosed – 25. ♜e6+! ♜×e6 26. ♗d5 ♞ac8 27. ♗×e6+ ♝h8 28. ♜d5 and the concerted actions of the queen and knight should bring a win (variation by Carlsen). For example, if 28...♞f8, then 29. ♜f6 is strong, with the threat of winning the queen by h2–h4.

25. ♜d7!

The poor rook! Black has reason to regret his superficial move 14...♞c8. Incidentally, the proud knight at d4 is also still playing the role of observer.

25...♞c4 26. b3 ♞c7 27. ♜d5!

Coordinating the actions of knight and bishop. Black cannot avoid loss of material: under threat is not only his rook, but also his queen in view of the threat of ♜d5–f6+ and h2–h4.



27...♞c1?

Now Black loses his queen. He should have accepted the loss of the exchange by retreating 27...♗d8, although it is clear



that the win for White would be merely a question of time.

28. h4! ♖xe1

If 28...♗d8, then 29. ♖xc1 ♕xc1 30. ♗f1 is decisive.

29. h×g5 ♕×g5 30. ♕g4 ♖a1 31. a4

Rook for queen is clearly insufficient compensation. Dominguez decided to play on to the time control.

31...♖g7 32. ♖c3 ♖a3 33. a×b5 a×b5 34. ♖×b5 ♖×b5 35. ♗×b5 ♕e3 36. ♖f1 ♖a2+ 37. ♕e2

Not only a retreat, but also the start of an attack on the f7-pawn.

37...♖a7 38. ♖h3 ♖a8 39. ♕c4 ♖h8+ 40. ♖g4 ♖h5 41. ♖×f7+ ♖h6 42. ♗d7

Black resigned.

Game 31

M. Carlsen – M. Adams

World Cup, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007
Nimzo-Indian Defence [E36]

1. d4 ♖f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♖c3 ♕b4 4. ♗c2 d5 5. a3 ♕xc3+ 6. ♗xc3 d×c4

English solidarity. Following the prescription of Nigel Short, Michael Adams concedes the centre, in order to develop his light-square bishop with gain of tempo. The main continuations are considered to be 6...c5 and 6...♗e4.

7. ♗xc4 b6 8. ♕f4

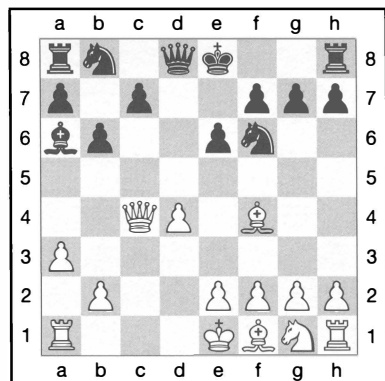
Carlsen is ready to engage in a theoretical discussion, by choosing the most critical variation with the acceptance of the pawn sacrifice. In the 2nd round of the World

Cup, Mikhail Gurevich played 8. ♖f3 0–0 9. ♕f4 against Adams, and after 9...♕a6 he retreated 10. ♗c2 (10. ♗xc7 ♗xc7 11. ♕xc7 ♖c8 12. ♕f4 ♖bd7 would have transposed into the present game) 10...♖bd7 11. ♖d1 ♗c8 12. g3 c5 13. ♕g2 ♕b7 14. dxc5 and offered a draw, which, naturally, was accepted. How can one reject upholding the black pieces without a fight in a mini-match of two games? In the second game Adams made successful use of the white pieces.

8...♕a6

The same idea can be carried out, without sacrificing a pawn – 8...♖d5 9. ♕g3 ♕a6, as Onischuk played against Carlsen in a blitz match for the first prize at the tournament in Biel. There followed 10. ♗a4+ ♗d7 11. ♗c2 ♗b5 12. ♖f3 ♖c6? and here 13. b4! with the threat of 14. e4 would have won.

Therefore 9...0–0 10. ♖f3 ♕a6 is more accurate, as in the game Beliavsky–Rozen-talis (Baden 2007). There followed 11. ♗a4 ♗d7 12. ♗c2 c5 13. ♕g5 ♖f6 14. ♕e5 cxd4 15. ♕xf6 d3 16. exd3 gxf6 17. ♖e4 ♗d4 18. ♗c3 ½–½.



9. ♗xc7 ♗xc7 10. ♕xc7 0–0

Strangely enough, this natural move proved to be a novelty. Black does not hurry to



determine the position of his knight, keeping open the option of both ...♖d7 and ...♖c6. Before this the main continuation was considered to be 10...♖c6 11. ♖f3. For example, the game Wang Hao–Jakovenko (Poikovsky 2008) continued 11...♖c8 12. ♖f4!? 0–0 13. ♖b1 ♖fd8 14. e3 ♖xf1 15. ♖xf1 ♖e4 16. ♖e2 ♖a5 17. ♖fd1 ♖b3 18. ♖e1 g5 19. ♖g3, and here after 19...h5 20. f3 ♖xg3+ 21. h×g3 a5 Black could have held the position. The game went 19...f5 20. ♖e5 ♖f7 21. f3 and White retained an advantage.

11. ♖f3 ♖c8 12. ♖f4 ♖bd7

For the sacrificed pawn Black has a lead in development and control of the c-file. The question is whether White can neutralise these temporary factors, while retaining his extra pawn.

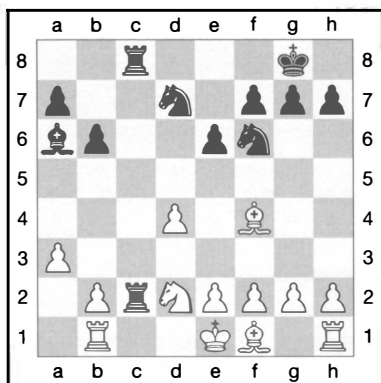
13. ♖d2!?

The start of an impressive manoeuvre.

13...♖c2

The best reply was 13...♖h5!, according to Adams, leaving the evidence in parentheses.

14. ♖b1 ♖ac8



15. ♖b3!

Now the depth of Carlsen's idea becomes apparent. He takes his knight to a1, from where it drives away the rook.

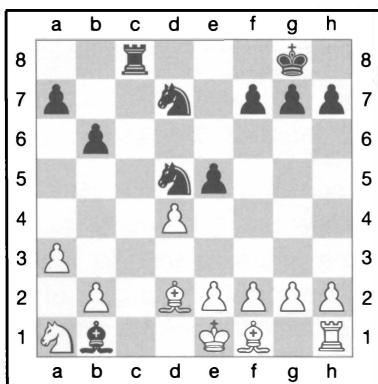
15...♖c4

An original decision, to say the least. Black goes in for a forcing line, since his play has come to a standstill. In the event of 15...♖d5 16. ♖d2 ♖7f6 17. f3 the move e2–e4 cannot be avoided, while if he attempts to prevent it with 16...f5, then after 17. ♖a1 ♖2c7 18. e3 ♖xf1 19. ♖xf1 e5 20. d×e5 ♖×e5 21. ♖e2 White consolidates his forces, retaining a sound extra pawn.

16. ♖a1! ♖a2 17. ♖xc2 ♖xb1 18. ♖a1 ♖d5

The attempt to cut off the bishop from the c1-square – 18...♖c4 19. e3 ♖c8 20. ♖d1 ♖e4 21. ♖g3 does not prevent White from completing his development after ♖f1–a6.

19. ♖d2 e5



A unique situation: White's passive pieces block the enemy rook's access to his rear, his kingside is undeveloped, but Black has no way of strengthening his position. Therefore he makes a last attempt to sup-



port his fading initiative, as otherwise after f2–f3 and e3–e4 his opening idea will have been a failure.

20. e3!?

Also possible is 20. dxe5 ♖xe5 21. e3 (intending ♙a6 and ♜e2) 21...♙d3 (weaker is 21...♙d3+ 22. ♙xd3 ♙xd3 23. f3 f5 24. ♜f2 ♜f7 25. ♖d1) 22. ♙e2, when the black pieces occupy highly active positions (variation by Adams). But not for long. Let us continue: 22...f5 23. f4 ♙xe2 24. ♜xe2 ♙c4 25. ♖c1 ♖c7 26. ♖c2 b5 27. b3! ♙xa3 28. ♖xc7 ♙xc7, and with his knight cut off at a3 it is unlikely that Black can hold the position. There can follow 29. ♜d3 (with the threat of ♙b4) or 29. ♙b4 ♙b1 30. ♜d3.

20...exd4 21. exd4 ♙b8

The manoeuvre 21...♙f8 22. ♙a6 ♖e8+ 23. ♜d1 ♙e6 looks more logical, threatening after ...♙dc7 to regain the pawn. But here too White retains the advantage: 24. ♖e1 ♖d8 25. ♙b3.

22. f3 ♙c6 23. ♙c4

A careless move, allowing Black to reinforce the blockade at d5. 23. ♜f2 with the threat of ♙a6 was more accurate. Then 23...♙a2 is dubious in view of 24. b3 ♙xd4 25. ♙c4, when Black has problems in releasing his stray bishop.

Therefore it is sounder to support the knight on d5 – 23...♙f5 24. ♙c4 ♙e6, at the same time setting a small trap: 25. ♖d1 ♙e3! 26. ♜xe3 ♙xc4.

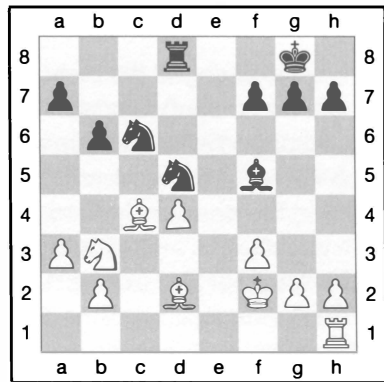
23...♖d8

23...♙cb4 came into consideration: 24. b3 ♙d3+ 25. ♜f1 ♙c7 (25...♖d8? 26. ♙xd5 ♖xd5 27. ♜e2) 26. ♜e2 ♖e8+, and, by giving up the blockade of the d4-pawn,

Black succeeds in exchanging the light-square bishop: 27. ♙e3 ♙f4+ 28. ♜f2 ♙d3+ 29. ♙xd3 ♙xd3, obtaining opposite-colour bishops and setting up new defensive lines. For example: 30. ♖d1 ♙a6! 31. d5 ♙b7 32. d6 ♙d5 33. ♙c2 f6 and ...♖d8.

24. ♜f2 ♙f5 25. ♙b3

White has managed to retain his extra pawn, but Black's control of the d5 blocking point leaves him with defensive resources.



25...♙e6 26. ♖c1 f6 27. a4 a5?!

This natural reaction to the threat of a4–a5 allows White to regroup his pieces. 27...♜f7 (with the idea of exchanging the light-square bishops after ...♙de7) 28. ♖e1 ♙ce7 followed by ...♙c7 was stronger.

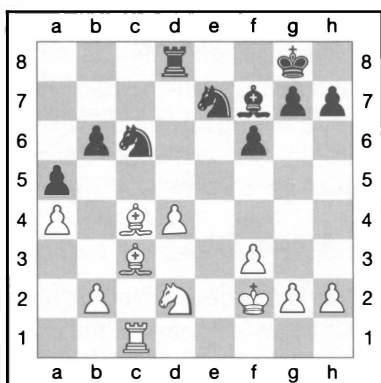
28. ♙c3

White frees his knight from the defence of the pawn, in order to transfer it to a more active post.

28...♙f7

Here also it was not yet too late for 28...♜f7 29. ♖e1 ♙ce7 30. ♙d2 ♙c7.

29. ♙d2 ♙de7

**30. ♖f1!**

'I could have exchanged the bishops, but with almost no time left I suddenly found a very good plan', Carlsen comments. He sacrifices the d4-pawn, advantageously transforming the position. Indeed, on this occasion too Magnus's intuition did not let him down. After 30. ♖d1 ♗xd4 31. ♕xf7+ ♜xf7 32. ♗c4 the exchange of the d4-pawn for the b6-pawn is indeed favourable for White, but Black could also play 30... ♕xc4 31. ♗xc4 ♗d5, continuing his blocking strategy.

30... ♗xd4 31. ♖e1 ♗dc6 32. ♗c4 ♗d5 33. ♖b1!

'The point. Black cannot take on c3 due to the b6-weakness, and as a result White will have time for a desirable regrouping.' (Carlsen)

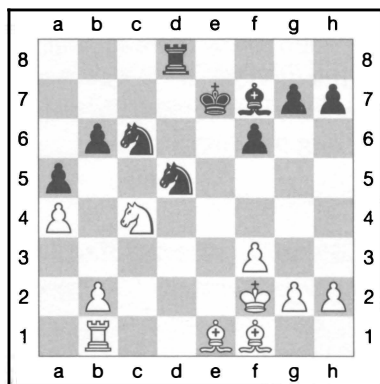
33... ♜f8?!

It is not surprising that in time-trouble Adams does not have the time to see through the opponent's idea, and he makes what is in general a useful move, centralising the king. But why not attack the a4-pawn? 33... ♕g6 34. ♖d1 (34. ♖c1 ♖c8 with the idea of ... ♗cb4) 34... ♕c2 35. ♖xd5 ♖xd5

36. ♗e3 ♕b3 37. ♗xd5 ♕xd5 suggests itself, retaining practical chances of a draw (variation by Carlsen). 33... ♕e8 is also possible, and if White tries to carry out his intended plan – 34. ♕e1, then 34... ♗ce7 35. b3 ♕g6, switching to an attack on the b3-pawn. If 36. ♖c1 there can follow 36... ♖c8 37. ♜g1 ♗e3 38. ♕f2 ♗d5.

34. ♕e1 ♗e7?!

Continuing on the same course. It was not yet too late to 'join up on' the a4-pawn – 34... ♗cb4 35. ♖d1 (or 35. ♜g1 ♖e8 36. ♕f2 ♖e6 37. ♖d1 ♕e8 38. b3 ♕g6, forcing 39. ♗a3) 35... ♗c2 36. ♕d2 ♕e8 37. b3 ♕g6 etc. 34... ♕g6 35. ♖d1 ♕c2 36. ♖d2 ♕xa4 37. ♗xb6 ♕b3 38. ♗xd5 ♖xd5, simplifying the position, was also possible.

**35. ♜g1!**

This was Carlsen's idea: the king moves away from the centre, but vacates the f2-square for the bishop, from where it attacks the b6-pawn, after which, relying on the strength of his bishop pair, White gains good winning chances.

One never tires of admiring the depth and precision of Carlsen's ideas! On the 13th move he embarked on a manoeuvre



with his knight into the corner of the board, which enabled him to keep his extra pawn, and on the 30th he devised a retreat by his pieces, to obtain a strategically more favourable position with equal material. The ability to arrange the pieces on the necessary squares, the depth of ideas and the purity of their implementation in some way remind one of José Raúl Capablanca.

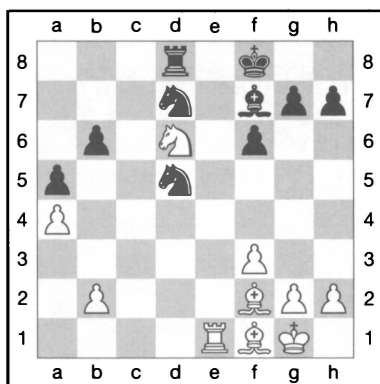
35...♖b8

Black takes his knight to d7, to support the b6-pawn. More active play came into consideration – 35...♘e5!? 36. ♘xe5 fxe5 37. ♙h4+ ♘f6 38. ♖e1 ♘d6 39. ♙g3 ♘d7 (39...♖e8?! 40. ♙b5 ♖e7 41. f4!) 40. ♙b5 ♙d5 41. ♖d1 (41. ♙xd7 ♖xd7 42. ♙xe5+ ♘c5 leads to the creation of opposite-colour bishops) 41...♙e6, and White has to look for new ways.

36. ♙f2

Carlsen comments that he used his remaining time studying the king walk after 36. ♘xb6! ♘xb6 37. ♙xa5 ♘d8d7 (37...♖d6? 38. ♙b4) 38. ♙b4+ ♙e6 39. ♖e1+ ♙f5 (39...♘d5? 40. ♙b5! is bad for Black) and he was unable to find a win. But had there been a little more time, he would surely have found 40. ♙d3+ ♙g5 41. ♖e7 ♘f8 42. ♖xf7 ♖xd3 43. ♙xf8 ♘xa4 44. ♖xg7+ with new material gains. It should be added that 39...♘e5 would also not have saved Black after 40. ♙a5 ♖b8 41. f4 ♘xa4 42. fxe5 ♘d7 (42...♘xb2? 43. exf6+ ♙xf6 44. ♙c3+ ♙g6 45. ♖b1; 42...♘xb2? 43. ♙c4+; 42...fxe5?! 43. ♙c7) 43. exf6 gxf6 44. b4 with a technically won endgame. In short, this could have been a worthy conclusion to the game.

**36...♘d7 37. ♖e1+ ♙f8 38. ♖d1 ♙e7
39. ♖e1+ ♙f8 40. ♘d6**



40...♘e5?!

A mistake on the last move before the time control. The exchange of the bishop creates a situation where the superiority of the two bishops over the two knights, which have no strong points, is very perceptible. 40...♘c5 was also unsuitable: 41. ♘xf7 ♙xf7 42. ♙xc5 bxc5 43. ♙c4 ♖d7 44. ♖d1 ♙e6 45. f4 g5 46. g3 and Black cannot disentangle himself (Adams). But 40...♙g8 was more resilient.

41. ♘xf7 ♙xf7 42. ♖d1

The centralised black knights are hobbled by the white bishops standing at the rear.

42...♙e7 43. f4 ♘g4

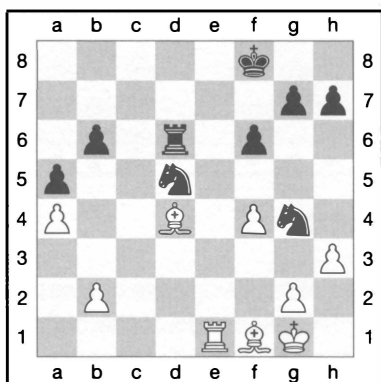
Black would have lost material after 43...♘xf4 44. ♖xd8 ♙xd8 45. ♙xb6+.

44. ♖e1+ ♙f8

Consideration should have been given to 44...♙d6!? 45. ♙d4 ♘xf4 46. ♖e4!? g5 47. ♙xb6 ♖b8 48. ♖d4+ ♙c6 49. ♙xa5 ♖xb2 50. ♙d2 (if 50. ♖b4 there follows 50...♖a2 with the threat of 51...♖a1) 50...♙e6, and the black pieces are more active than in the game.

**45. ♖d4 ♜d6**

45...♜xf4 was dubious in view of 46. ♖xb6 ♜d5 47. ♜e4 g5 48. g3 f5 49. ♜d4.

46. h3**46...♜h6**

Adams thinks that it was possible to capture the pawn – 46...♜xf4 47. ♜e4 ♜e6 48. ♜xe6 ♜xe6 49. hxc4 ♜e4 50. ♖xb6 ♜xa4, but Black would hardly be able to save such an endgame. For example, 51. ♖b5 ♜a1+ (in the event of 51...♜xc4 52. ♖xa5 ♜e7 53. ♖c3 the outside passed pawn, supported by the bishops, is bound to win) 52. ♜f2 ♜b1 53. ♖c5+ ♜f7 54. ♖c4+ ♜e8 55. b3. The king approaches the centre, after which the b6-pawn is won. Possibly this was the only practical chance, since in the subsequent play Carlsen did not offer another one, unhurriedly bringing the game to a victorious conclusion.

47. ♜d1!

Dispelling Black's last illusions (47...♜xf4? 48. ♖c5).

47...♜f5 48. ♖f2 ♜e7

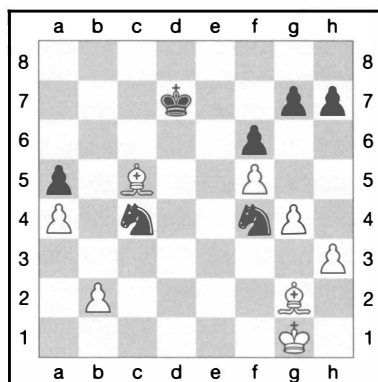
After the rook exchange 48...♜xf4 49. ♜xd6

♜xd6 50. ♖xb6 the knights lose their last strong point and are unable to resist the long-range bishops, as occurred in the game. Even so, Black cannot avoid the exchange of rooks.

49. g4 ♜h6

After 49...♜fe3? the pin 50. ♜e1 is decisive.

50. f5 ♜f7 51. ♖g2 ♜f4 52. ♜xd6 ♜xd6 53. ♖xb6 ♜c4 54. ♖c5+ ♜d7

**55. ♖f1**

The position is a purely technical one, and through inertia Carlsen retains the bishop pair. But, as it transpires, the knights are able to stand up for themselves, and avoiding the exchange merely prolongs the game. 55. b3! ♜xg2 (55...♜d2 56. ♖e3) 56. ♜xg2 ♜d2 57. b4, creating an outside passed pawn, was stronger. 57...♜e4 58. ♖f8 ♜e8 59. bxa5! is an amusing variation.

55...♜xb2 56. ♖b5+ ♜d8

56...♜c7 was more resilient: 57. ♖f8 g6 (or 57...♜xh3+ 58. ♜h2 ♜f2 59. g5 followed by ♖xg7) 58. fxg6 hxg6 59. h4, although here too Black is unable to save the game.



57. ♖b6+ ♜e7 58. ♜h2

Capturing the pawn would have won more quickly – 58. ♖xa5 ♜xh3+ 59. ♜g2 ♜f4+ 60. ♜f3 ♜d5 61. ♜e4.

58...♜d5 59. ♖xa5 ♜d6 60. ♖d2 ♜c5

Now, when the king has come to the aid of the knights, White cannot get by without the exchange of one of his bishops.

61. ♜g3 ♜c7 62. ♖e3+ ♜b4 63. ♖d2+ ♜c5 64. ♖c1 ♜c4 65. ♖xc4 ♜xc4 66. ♖d2 ♜a6 67. a5

Of course, in this endgame White also has an easy win.

67...♜b5 68. ♜f3 ♜c5 69. ♖c3 h6 70. ♜e3 ♜c4 71. ♖d4 ♜a6 72. ♜e4 ♜b4 73. h4 ♜b5 74. ♖c3 ♜a6 75. ♜d5 ♜c5 76. ♖d4 ♜d3 77. ♜e6

Black resigned.

Game 32

M. Carlsen – I. Cheparinov

World Cup, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007
Torre Attack [A48]

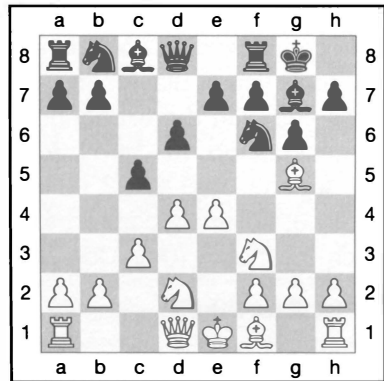
1. d4 ♜f6 2. ♜f3 g6 3. ♖g5

Carlsen chooses the Torre Attack, avoiding the main lines of the Grünfeld and King's Indian Defences, which are possible in reply to 3. c4. A quite logical decision in a mini-match in the World Cup, where with the 'classical' time limit the white pieces were of primary importance and there was a risk of running into a prepared line by the productive Bulgarian Topalov–Cheparinov pairing.

3...♖g7 4. ♜bd2 d6

The critical reply to the development of the knight at d2 is 4...d5, restricting its influence in the centre, but the move 4...d6 also has its virtues. However, from a romantic such as Cheparinov one would not expect anything else.

5. e4 0-0 6. c3 c5



7. dxc5

The game has transposed into a quiet variation of the Pirc-Ufimtsev Defence where, as is well known, the attempt to maintain the pawn tension by 7. ♖d3 leads to the exchange of White's important dark-square bishop: 7...cxd4 8. cxd4 h6 9. ♖h4 ♜h5! with good prospects for Black. In this respect the game Timman–Topalov (Belgrade 1995) is instructive: 10. 0-0 g5 11. ♖g3 g4 12. ♜h4 ♜xg3 13. hxg3 ♖xd4 14. ♜f5 ♖xf5 15. exf5 h5 16. f6 ♜d7 (16...e6 17. ♜e4 ♖xf6 18. ♜d2 ♜g7 or the immediate 16...♖xf6 is stronger) 17. fxex7 ♜xe7 18. ♖f5 ♜c5 19. ♜c4 with sharp play, where White has sufficient compensation for the pawn.

7...dxc5 8. ♖c4

After 8. ♖e2 ♜c6 9. 0-0 ♜c7 10. ♜c2 ♖e6 Black has an easier game.



8...♖c6 9. 0-0 ♖c7

9...♖a5!? is more active: 10. ♖e2 ♖e6 11. ♖e1 a6 12. ♖c2 (or 12. ♖f4 h6 13. ♖c2 b5 14. h3 ♖b6 with equal chances) 12...b5 13. ♖b3 ♖xb3 14. axb3 ♖c7 with good play for Black, Malaniuk–Marin (Romania 1992).

10. ♖e2

The main continuation is considered to be 10. ♖e1, after which Black can carry out the same line with the exchange of the dark-square bishop: 10...h6 11. ♖h4 ♖h5 12. ♖c2 ♖g4 13. ♖g3 ♖xg3 14. hxg3 h5 15. ♖f1 ♖h6, obtaining comfortable play, Burmakin–Kurnosov (Ulan Ude 2009).

10...h6 11. ♖h4 ♖h5!

The crucial manoeuvre in this variation, leading to the exchange of the dark-square bishop.

12. ♖fe1

If 12. ♖e3 there can follow 12...♖a5 13. ♖d3 c4 14. ♖c2 g5 15. ♖g3 ♖xg3 16. hxg3 ♖d8 with good play for Black.

12...♖g4 13. ♖e3!

A useful move, moving the queen out of the pin. Now the natural 13...b6 is met by 14. e5!, shutting the g7-bishop out of the game.

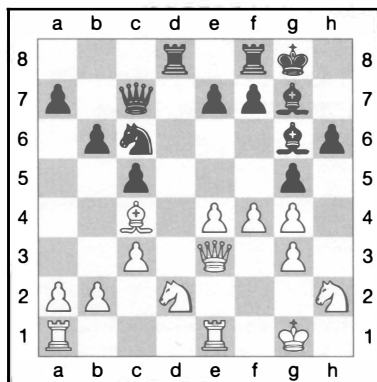
13...g5

After the inclusion of 13...♖a5 14. ♖f1 and now 14...g5 Black has to reckon with 15. ♖xg5!? hxg5 16. ♖xg5 ♖f4! 17. h3 ♖e6 18. ♖xf4 ♖xf4 19. ♖xe7 ♖fc8 20. ♖g5, when White has three pawns for a knight, which may be advantageous in the end-game.

14. ♖g3 ♖xg3 15. hxg3 b6 16. ♖h2 ♖h5

A provocative move: Cheparinov invites the enemy fire. 16...♖d7 was more circumspect.

17. g4 ♖g6 18. g3 ♖ad8 19. f4



19...♖d4!?

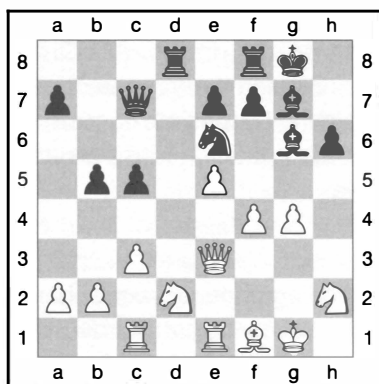
Nevertheless Ivan imposes his play! The advanced knight is immune on account of the loss of the queen.

20. ♖ac1 b5! 21. ♖f1

After the active 21. ♖d5 with the threat of twice capturing on d4, White has to reckon with 21...♖b6!?, when the attempt to shut in the bishop – 22. f5 ♖h7 23. ♖df3 ♖xf3+ 24. ♖xf3 e6 25. ♖b3 c4 leads to the exchange of queens, which does not come into Carlsen's plans.

21...gxf4 22. gxf4 ♖e6 23. e5

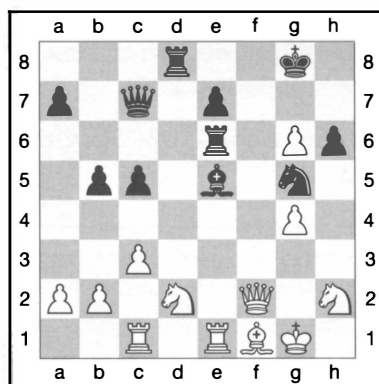
The fork 23. f5 is parried by 23...♖e5 24. ♖hf3 ♖f4 25. ♖e2 ♖g5, and if 26. fxg6 Black wins by 26...♖xd2 27. ♖xd2 ♖xd2 28. ♖xd2 ♖f3+.



23...f5!

Cheparinov is eager to sacrifice a piece. He cannot remain for ever under the impending threat of the pawn phalanx!

24. exf6 fxf6 25. f5 dfg5 26. fxg6 fxe6 27. f2 e5!



For the sacrificed piece Black has a strong attack. For example, White loses after 28. dhf3? g3 29. f2 g2 e1 30. dxe1 f4! or 30. fxe1 fxd2!. Somewhat better is 28. ddf3 g3 29. f2 g2, when after exchanges on e1 – 29... e1 30. fxe1 fxe1 31. dxe1 – Black retains the initiative: 31... c4! 32. ddf3 fb6+ 33. h1 f7g6, since White's minor pieces are still passive (variation by Shipov).

28. fxe5

A pragmatic approach. Without delving into details, Magnus eliminates the powerful bishop.

28...f2 29. ddf3

Here Carlsen wrongly avoids going into an endgame, since the pressure of the heavy pieces on the central files is so great that there are no prospects of activating the minor pieces. After 29. g2 f2 30. ddf3 f2d1+ 31. fxd1 f2xd1+ 32. f2f1 f2xf1+ 33. dxf1 dxf3+ 34. fxf3 f2xg6 35. f2f2 he would have obtained a more favourable version of the endgame than that which occurred in the game. As for Sergey Shipov's recommendation 33. fxf1 dxf3+ 34. dxf3 a6, this endgame is safer for Black, since it is not possible to retain the g6-pawn – 35. d4h4 f2e4 36. g2 f2xg4 37. d4f5 f2g5 38. d4xe7+ f2f8 39. d4d5 f2xg6, and with his outside passed h-pawn Black is not in danger of losing. Also insufficient is 35. f2f2 f2xg6 36. f2g3 f2d6 37. f2e2 e5! 38. d4xe5 f2d2, when the rook reaches the second rank.

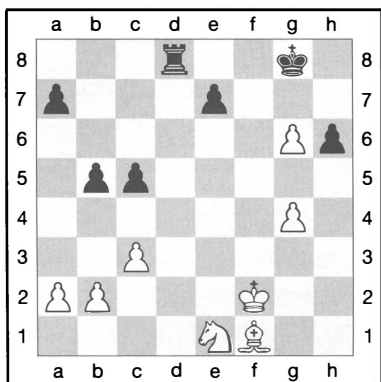
29...dxf3+ 30. dxf3 f2f4 31. f2e1!

Carlsen finally realised that he needed to exchange the queens.

31...f2xe1

It is not clear – who in fact is playing for a win? Black could have captured the g4-pawn – 31... f2xg4+ 32. g2 f2xe1+, forcing a draw in the variations 33. d4xe1 f2xg6 34. f2xc5 f2d1 35. f2xe7 f2g3 36. f2f1 f2f4+ 37. f2g1 f2g3+ or 33. f2xe1 f2xg6 34. f2xe7 f2d1+ 35. f2f2 f2c2+ 36. f2g3 f2g6+.

32. d4xe1 f2xf2+ 33. f2xf2

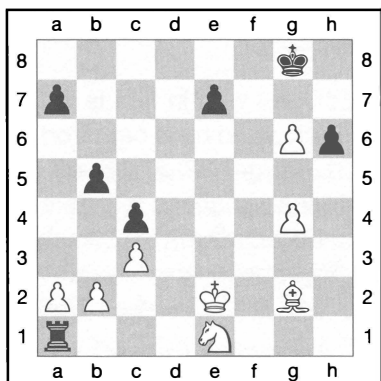


If this position is compared with the one examined in the notes to White's 29th move, it is obvious that the situation is worse for him.

33...d2+ 34. e3 d1

Black makes things difficult for himself. He should have reduced the number of pawns: 34...x2! 35. d3 c2 36. dxc5 xxc3+ 37. d4 g3 38. e2 g7, and after the win of the g- or the a-pawn he is close to a draw. This is confirmed by the variations 39. d3 xg4+ 40. e5 g2 41. e6+ g8 42. d7 h5 or 39. g5 hxg5 40. d3 a6 41. dxa6 e5+ 42. e4 xg6 43. d5 g4 44. xe5+ h5 45. xb5 a3, where the outside passed pawns give Black sufficient counterplay.

35. e2 a1 36. g2 c4



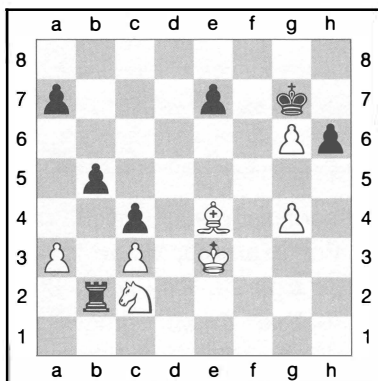
The subsequent play in this ending resembles a three-act drama. Act One – lost illusions. Carlsen ignores the sharp move 37. b4, aiming by the time control on move 40 to obtain a position with a clearer pawn structure.

37. a3

Good winning chances would have been given by the energetic 37. b4!, blocking the queenside pawns, which would have enabled the minor pieces to be activated. Let us consider the main variations:

- a) 37...xa2+ 38. e3 g7 39. e4 e5 (otherwise d4) 40. c2 b2 41. f5! a6 42. f3! b3 (or 42...a2 43. e3 a3 44. d5) 43. e4 xxc3 44. xe5, and White develops an attack on the king;
b) 37...cxb3 38. axb3 a5 (in the event of 38...g7 White attacks with 39. e4 a3 40. d2! xxb3 41. d4) 39. c6! a4 (39...b4 40. c4) 40. b4!, and the a-pawn will be stopped by d2.

37...b1 38. e4! xxb2+ 39. c2 g7 40. e3



This was the position Carlsen had aimed for. The black pawns have been stopped, and the white pieces are excellently coordinated. It would appear that the win is

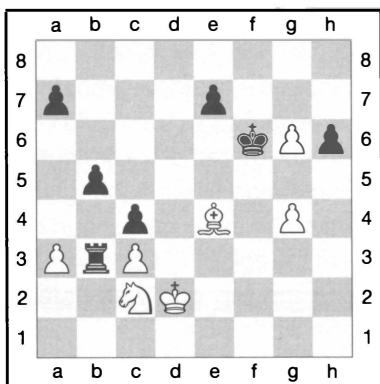


a matter of technique. Indeed, after the attempt to impede the king by 40...e5 White creates an attack against its opposite number: 41. ♖b4! ♖b3 42. ♘d5 ♖xa3 43. ♕f5! b4 44. ♘c7! (with the threat of ♕e8+) 44...♗f8 (44...♖xc3+ 45. ♗e4) 45. ♗e4 bxc3 46. ♗xe5 ♗e7 (otherwise ♗f6) 47. ♘d5+ ♗f8 48. ♘f4! ♖a6 49. ♗d4, winning the pawns (variations by Shipov). But all is not so clear.

40...♖b3!

Act Two – disappointment. This accurate rook move, tying the king to the c3-pawn, is a kind of cold shower for White. It transpires that after the intended 41. ♘d4 there follows 41...a5 42. ♗c5 (42. ♕f5 ♗f6 and ...e7–e6) 42...♖xc3 43. ♗xb5 ♖g3 44. ♕f5 ♗f6 45. ♘d4 ♖xa3 46. ♗xc4 ♖e3 and White is stymied. If 47. ♘e6 there follows 47...♖xe6, with the theme of the dark-square corner in mind: 48. g7 ♖c6+ (or 48...♗xg7 49. ♕xe6 h5! 50. g5 ♗g6) 49. ♗b5 ♗xg7 50. ♗xc6 h5! 51. g5 a4. He is forced to retreat his king.

41. ♗d2 ♗f6?



An unexpected conclusion to the Second Act. After the pin 41...♖b2 there is nothing more sensible for White than 42. ♗e3, when

Black has to repeat moves 42...♖b3 with a probable draw. Now, however, White gains an opportunity to support the g6-pawn and he should be able to win.

42. ♘d4!

In view of the threatened knight manoeuvre ♘d4–e2–g3–h5, the idea of breaking through with the a-pawn after 42...♖b2+ 43. ♗e3 is too late, and so Black is forced to exchange his b5-pawn for the a3-pawn, which radically changes his pawn structure for the worse.

42...♖xa3 43. ♘xb5 ♖a5 44. ♘c7 ♗g7

Black also loses after 44...♖g5 45. ♕f5 h5 46. ♘e8+ ♗e5 47. g×h5! ♗×f5 48. g7, when he has to give up his rook.

45. ♘e6+ ♗h8 46. ♗e3 ♖a1 47. ♗d4 a5 48. ♕c6!

The bishop is hurrying to f7.

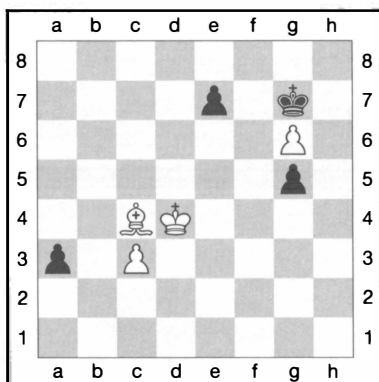
48...a4 49. ♕e8 ♖g1 50. g5!

The g5-pawn joins the group supporting the g6-pawn – it has to be covered.

50...a3! 51. ♕f7 ♖xg5!

Here is a surprise! Just try in time-trouble coping with the advancing pawns.

52. ♘xg5 h×g5 53. ♕xc4 ♗g7





Act Three – swings. It has nothing in common with the preceding acts. It was performed in severe time-trouble by two actors worn out by the very difficult struggle in the middlegame. The strength of the fighters was exhausted, and in such a condition, with time running out, calculating work is practically impossible. As fortunes swung backwards and forwards, Caissa smiled on her favourite.

54. ♖d3?

This move throws away the win, which could have been achieved by the study-like 54. ♖e5! ♖xg6 55. ♔a2. Now the race to queen a pawn – 55...g4 56. ♖f4 ♖h5 57. c4 ♖h4 58. c5 g3 59. ♖f3! ♖h3 60. c6 ends with a winning check. It is also possible to win more prosaically: 57. ♖g3 ♖g5 58. c4, and Black cannot hold his g4-pawn.

54...♖xg6 55. ♖c2 g4 56. ♖b3 ♖f5

In the pawn race, time is important. After 56...e5 57. ♔d5 ♖f5 58. c4 e4 59. c5 e3 Black would also queen one of his pawns.

57. ♖xa3 g3?

57...e5 or 57...♖e4 would have led to a draw. There is no point in commenting in depth on instant play in a time scramble, but we will merely touch on the errors.

58. ♔f1?

Why not the immediate 58. ♔d5, occupying the long diagonal?

58...e5?

58...♖e4 would have saved the game.

59. ♖b3?

The blockading 59. ♔g2 would have won.

59...♖f4?

Here also it was not too late for 59...♖e4.

60. ♔g2

It is no longer possible to go wrong, as ...♖f3 was threatened.

60...♖e3 61. ♖c4 ♖f2 62. ♔e4

Black resigned.

This and the preceding games used up much of Carlsen's strength. Everyone has their limit, and in the semi-final he lost without a particular fight to Gata Kam-sky (½–1½), who in fact won the World Cup. Questioned whether he was disappointed to have gone out of the World Cup at the semi-final stage, Magnus replied: 'I hadn't expected to go so far. And I was very tired, so basically I was ready to go out any point.' This was not surprising, since for practically the entire year he had not had any respite, playing tournament after tournament. At a press conference Carlsen looked extremely tired. Indeed to reach the semi-final of the World Cup after such a lengthy marathon of difficult battles was an indication of his fighting spirit. An important stage in his career had come to an end – at the age of 17 Carlsen had made his way to the top and was established among the world elite.

Chapter 3

Life at the Top

In 2008 the organisers of the chess festival in Wijk aan Zee were able to assemble the strongest field for the main tournament in its entire history (FIDE category 20). They could hardly have imagined that in such prestigious company Carlsen would achieve the greatest success in his short career. He shared 1st–2nd places with Aronian, ahead of all the main nominees in the battle for the world crown. The last year had not been wasted. From a complete fiasco in his first A tournament in 2007, without a single win, to a triumph with five won games – this was the result of an enormous amount of work. But as before, Magnus was modest: ‘Before the tournament I thought that if I could score 50%, it would not be a bad result,’ he said in an interview for the magazine *64 Shakhmatnoe obozrenie*. ‘I wasn’t expecting to win, of course, and the share of first place was a pleasant surprise for me.’ But, as they say, appetite improves during the meal. Magnus himself realised how he was improving from one tournament to the next. Along with the perfecting of his positional understanding, the technique of playing simple positions and in particular the endgame, he was also accumulating experience in his meetings with the strongest players in the world. His self-esteem was also growing: ‘I can no longer consider 50% a good result. Of course, this is a big success, but in the world there are still many players who are stronger than me. To become world champion, I will have to develop and improve in many respects.’

Game 33

M. Carlsen – P. Eljanov

Wijk aan Zee 2008

Grünfeld Defence [D91]

It is rare to win a simple position against a strong grandmaster without any apparent effort, based on factors that are deeply hidden. This game, although without outward effects, is impressive for its completeness.

1. d4 ♖f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 d5 4. ♖f3
♗g7 5. ♗g5

White’s system of development associated with his last two moves has the aim of forcing Black to concede the centre. The roots of White’s idea lie in the game Alekhine–Bogoljubow (Vienna 1922), where White first developed his bishop – 4. ♗g5, after which there followed 4...♞e4. Later things were refined: after the inclusion of 4. ♖f3 ♗g7 the move ...♞e4 causes White less trouble.

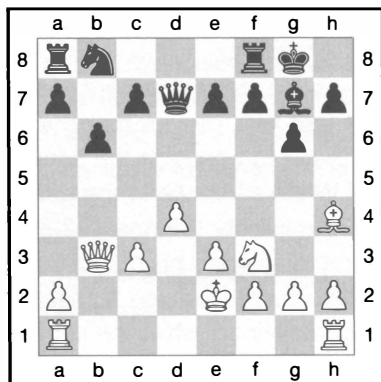
(see next diagram)



5...♖e4 6. ♙h4 ♜xc3 7. bxc3 dxc4
8. ♖a4+ ♗d7 9. ♗xc4 b6 10. e3 ♙a6
11. ♗b3 ♙xf1 12. ♜xf1 0-0

Carlsen's reputation in questions of home preparation had grown so much, that Eljanov avoided 12...♜c6 13. ♜e2 0-0, which he had successfully employed in a game with Kiril Georgiev (Wijk aan Zee 2006), where after 14. ♜hd1 ♜a5 15. ♗b4 ♖fe8 16. ♖ac1 ♖ac8 17. c4 ♗g4 18. h3 ♗e4 19. ♗a4 e5 he gained quite good counterplay.

13. ♜e2



13...c5

In provoking the capture on c5, which is positionally advantageous for White, Black associates this move with a pawn sacrifice,

hoping to exploit the opening of files for his rooks, supported by the long-range bishop on g7.

14. dxc5

14. ♜hd1 ♜c6 15. dxc5 is also played, but here Black has already completed his development and he can begin counterplay on the queenside, exploiting the position of the white king in the centre. For example, the game Neverov–Pavlovic (Hastings 2005/6) continued 15...♗c8 16. ♖ab1 bxc5 17. ♗c4 ♜a5 18. ♗b5 ♜c6 19. ♗c4 (19. ♗xc5 ♗a6+) 19...♖b8 20. ♖xb8 ♗xb8 21. ♗xc5 ♖c8 22. ♙xe7 (22. ♜f1 was more cautious) 22...♗b7 23. ♙d6 ♗a6+ 24. ♙d3 ♜a5 (24...♜e5!? 25. ♗xc8+ ♗xc8 26. ♙xe5 ♙xe5 27. ♜xe5 ♗e6 also came into consideration, obtaining an outside passed pawn after ...♗xa2) 25. ♗d5 ♜c4 26. ♜g5 ♜b2 27. ♗xf7+ ♜h8 with sharp play, favourable for Black.

14...♜a6!

Black intends to play his knight to the excellent square c5 with gain of tempo in the event of 15. cxb6 ♜c5 16. ♗c4 axb6 17. ♜hd1 ♗b7, obtaining excellent compensation for the pawn (...♖a4 is threatened).

15. ♜hd1 ♗b7

The alternative is 15...♗c7. In the game Lautier–Ivanchuk (Terrasa 1991) White decided to accept the pawn sacrifice, and this is what happened: 16. cxb6 axb6 17. a4 ♜c5 18. ♗b4 ♖a5 19. ♙g3 e5 20. ♜d2 (or 20. ♜f1 ♖fa8 21. ♗c4 b5) 20...♖fa8 21. ♜c4 ♜xa4! 22. ♜f1 ♙f8! 23. ♙d6 ♜xc3 24. ♖ac1 ♖c5 25. ♙d3 ♜e4! 0-1.

But White is by no means obliged to accept the pawn sacrifice, and he can play 16. c6!?, as in the game.

16. c6



Of course, 16. cxb6?! axb6 17. ♖ab1 ♜c5 18. ♜b4 ♜e4 did not come into Carlsen's plans. In his preparations for the game he was aiming for a favourable endgame.

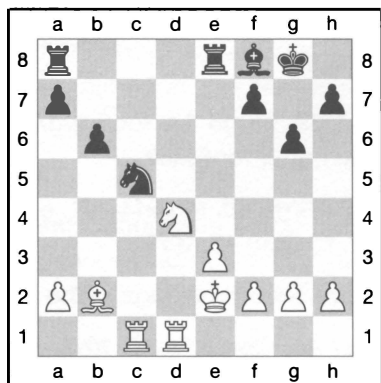
16... ♜xc6 17. ♙xe7 ♜fe8 18. ♙a3 ♜xc3

Black regains the pawn, since in the event of 18... ♜ad8, as played in the game Griivas–Leko (Dortmund 1992), the compensation for it is insufficient: 19. ♜ac1 ♜c7 20. c4 ♜e6 21. ♜f1 ♜e4 22. ♜d5.

19. ♜xc3 ♙xc3 20. ♜ac1 ♙b4 21. ♙b2!

White deploys his pieces in their most active positions.

21... ♙f8 22. ♜d4 ♜c5



23. g4!

A deep move, aimed not only at seizing space, but also at fighting for the weakened f6-point.

23... ♜e4

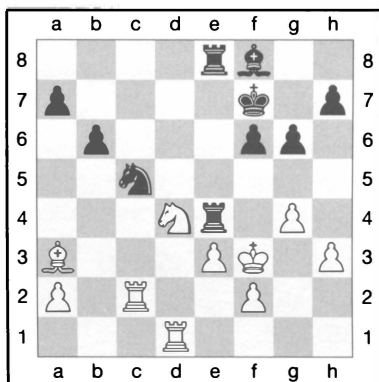
Here there is nothing for the rook to do – the knight at d4 stands like a rock. According to the theory of positional play, formulated by the first world champion Wilhelm Steinitz, 'small advantages' should be accumulated. Among these is a queenside pawn majority, which Black has here, as in many Grünfeld-type positions. But, in contrast to other variations with a strong pawn centre for White, where the black pawns are very

mobile, in the given specific position they are immobilised. Therefore Black should have thought about preparing to advance them – 23... a6 24. ♙a3 ♜ac8 etc.

24. ♜f3 ♜ae8 25. h3 f6

Logical. Black has gone totally onto the defensive and he brings his king to the centre.

26. ♙a3 ♜f7 27. ♜c2



Carlsen's technique in this endgame resembles the 'intricate' style of Anatoly Karpov in his best years, when he would lull his opponents with unhurried manoeuvres, maintaining the pressure and forcing them sooner or later to weaken themselves. White prepares to double his rooks on one of the files, intending the knight sortie to b5.

27... ♜a6?

This is wrong. The knight at c5 was actively placed, and the decision to exchange bishops is a strategic mistake. Now Black's rear, especially the d6-square, is extremely weak, and the white rooks are able to invade. He should have stuck to waiting tactics, for example 27... ♜e7, offering White a choice: to play an endgame with an isolated c5-pawn after 28. ♙xc5 bxc5 29. ♜b3 (29. ♜xc5 ♜xe3+) 29... ♜c7 30. ♜c4, or continue manoeuvring – 28. ♜b5 ♜b7, although finding the key to Black's position

is not easy. Thus, here the exchange of the f8-bishop is not so dangerous: 29. ♖d6+ ♙x d6 30. ♙x d6 ♖c7, and Black sets up new defensive lines, since going into the rook ending by 31. ♙xc5 bxc5 has its drawbacks, if only because of their drawing tendencies. Apparently, the spirit of the preceding strategy could have been maintained by a pawn offensive on the kingside – 29. h4 with the idea of breaking through, depending on circumstances, with g4–g5 or h4–h5. Here are some possible variations:

- a) 29...h6 30. ♖c4 ♙e6 31. ♖d4 (or 31. ♙d8 ♙e7 32. ♙h8 ♖g7 33. ♙a8) 31...♙e8 32. ♖e2 ♖c8 33. h5;
- b) 29...♙e5 30. ♙b2 ♙e6 31. ♖cd2 ♙e7 32. ♙d5 a6 33. ♖d6+ ♙x d6 34. ♙x d6 ♖c7 35. ♙d8.

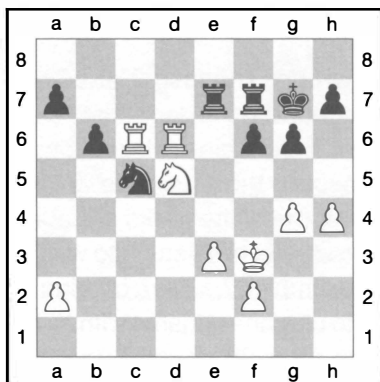
28. ♙x f8 ♖x f8 29. ♖c6

The start of the decisive invasion.

29...♖g7 30. ♖b5 ♙4e7 31. ♙dd6 ♖c5 32. ♖c7

The capture 32. ♙x f6? ♖d7 leads to the loss of the exchange.

32...♙f8 33. h4 ♙f7 34. ♖d5



Complete domination by White. Black is forced to exchange a pair of rooks (oth-

erwise the f6-pawn cannot be defended), after which the endgame becomes of a technical nature. Sooner or later the e- and f-pawns will advance, creating a passed pawn.

34...♙d7 35. ♙x d7 ♖x d7

35...♙d7 36. ♖x f6 ♙f7 37. g5 ♖d7 38. ♖e4 ♖x f6+ 39. gxf6+ ♙x f6 40. ♙x f6 ♖x f6 41. ♖d5 leads to a won pawn endgame for White.

36. ♖g3 ♖c5 37. f3 h6

Activity with 37...f5 is inappropriate – 38. gxf5 gxf5 39. h5. 38. h5 ♖d3 39. g5 gxf5 40. ♙h6 is also good for White.

38. ♖f4 g5

38...♖h7 39. h5 g5 40. ♖d5 ♖g7 41. e4 was little better for Black.

39. ♖h5+ ♖g6 40. f4 gxf4+ 41. ex f4 ♖h7 42. f5 ♖g8 43. ♖f3

The decisive word belongs to the king!

43...♖d7 44. ♖e4 ♖f8 45. ♙c8+ ♖e7 46. ♖d5 b5 47. ♙h8 ♖b6+ 48. ♖c6 ♖c4 49. ♙a8 ♖e5+ 50. ♖c5 ♖d7+ 51. ♖xb5 ♖d6 52. ♙xa7 ♙f8 53. ♖b4 ♖c5 54. ♖c4

Black resigned.

Game 34

V. Kramnik – M. Carlsen

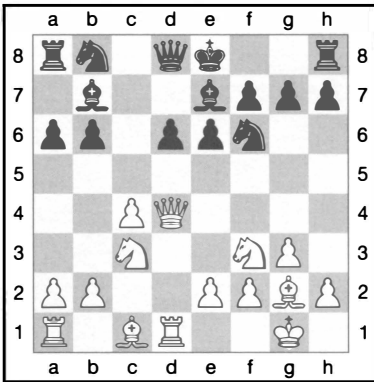
Wijk aan Zee 2008

English Opening [A30]

In this game Magnus demonstrated the significance of a correct opening choice. With the aid of the cunning 'hedgehog' he was able to outplay the world champion.



1. ♖f3 ♖f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♘c3 c5 4. g3
b6 5. ♗g2 ♗b7 6. 0–0 ♗e7 7. d4 cxd4
8. ♖xd4 d6 9. ♖d1 a6



Black has arranged his pawns in a so-called 'hedgehog' set-up, the spines of which are aimed at the central squares and b5.

10. ♖g5

This continuation was introduced more than 30 years earlier. White plays his knight to e4 in order to attack the d6-pawn.

10... ♗xg2 11. ♗xg2 ♖c6

The developing 11... ♖bd7 does not work because of 12. ♖ge4, winning the d6-pawn.

12. ♖f4

By playing his queen to this active position, White maintains the pressure on the d6-pawn, intending to include his bishop in the attack on it from a3 (after b2–b3).

12... 0–0

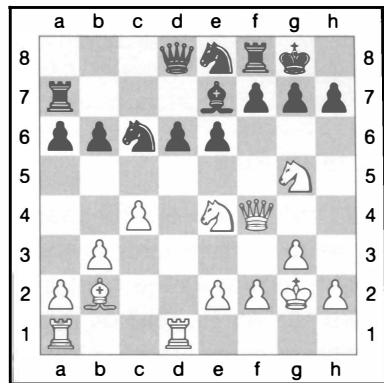
The alternative is 12... ♖a7, immediately switching the rook to d7. If White does not react to this manoeuvre, the 'hedgehog' may demonstrate its spines, as in the game Webb–Hort (Hastings 1977/78):

13. b3 0–0 14. ♖ge4 ♖d7 15. ♗b2 ♖e8 16. ♖ac1 d5 with excellent play for Black. But also in the event of 13. ♖ce4 ♖d7 14. ♖xf6+ ♗xf6 White cannot make use of tactics: 15. ♖xh7 ♖xh7 16. ♖e4 ♖h5 17. ♖xc6 ♖c5 18. ♖e4 ♖c8, regaining the pawn with an equal game (Adorjan–Bischoff, New York 1986).

13. ♖ce4 ♖e8!

It is important to defend the pawn without simplifying the position, since the white knights are 'hanging' somewhat. In the event of 13... ♖xe4?! 14. ♖xe4 ♖a7 15. b3 ♖d7 16. ♗b2 the 'hedgehog's' spines are not so effective: 16... d5 17. cxd5 ♖xd5 18. ♖c3 ♖xd1 19. ♖xd1 ♖c8 20. ♖e4, and White created threats to the king (Csom–Kindermann, Biel 1986).

14. b3 ♖a7 15. ♗b2



15... ♖d7

In his commentary Carlsen remarks that he had not expected such an old-fashioned variation as 10. ♖g5 and he had to begin thinking for himself. Intuitively he followed the correct course, and since the young 'classic' is accustomed to placing his pieces on the best squares, this

move came naturally to him. In the game Wojtkiewicz – Ftacnik (Budapest 1993) Black carried out the thematic ‘hedgehog’ advance 15...b5! (with the idea after 16. cxb5 axb5 of playing ...d6–d5). The game continued 16. ♖f3 ♜a8 17. ♝ac1 h6 18. ♜ed2 (if 18. ♜c3 there can follow 18...♜e5 with the threat of ...♙g5) 18...♝d7 19. ♙g1 ♜b7 20. ♜e4 bxc4 21. ♜xc4 ♝c7 22. ♜d3 d5 with roughly equal chances.

16. ♝ac1

White completes his development, indirectly preventing ...d6–d5.

16...♜c7

A new idea in the ‘hedgehog’ structure, found at the board. Black prepares a pawn offensive with ...f7–f5 and ...g7–g5, driving back the white pieces with gain of tempo, and beforehand he defends his e6-pawn. The standard plan involves the preparation of ...b6–b5 – 16...♜a8 17. ♜f3 b5.

17. ♜f3 f5 18. ♜c3

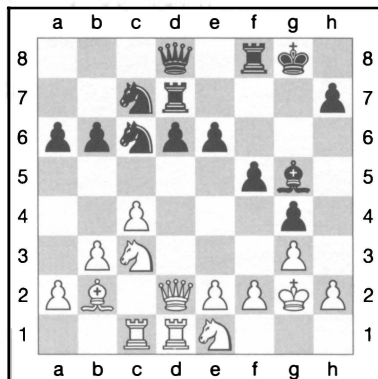
After the retreat 18. ♜ed2 the knight blocks the d-file for the rook, and Black can switch to play in the centre – 18...e5!? (here 18...g5 19. ♜e3 g4 20. ♜e1 is less effective, since the b6-pawn needs defending) 19. ♜e3 ♜e6 with the idea of ...♜a8 and ...♜cd4.

18...g5 19. ♜d2 g4 20. ♜e1

Everybody back! The active 20. ♜d4?! is worse because of 20...♙g5 21. e3 ♜e5, when the long a8–h1 diagonal passes into Black’s undivided possession. There is an especially yawning weakness at f3, which makes it hard for White to create play on

the queenside: after b3–b4 and c4–c5 the d-file is opened, creating conditions for the exchange sacrifice on d4.

20...♙g5!



The hand of a great master! Black provokes a weakening of the f3-square, a desirable one for a knight. Compared with the position after Black’s 16th move, the picture has changed radically. He is in complete possession of the initiative.

21. e3 ♝ff7

A skilful combination of offensive with prophylaxis: Black prepares in good time for White’s counterplay with b3–b4 and c4–c5, by defending his rook on d7.

22. ♙g1 ♜e8

This passive knight is switched to a more active post.

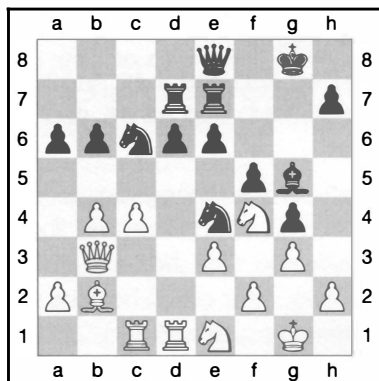
23. ♜e2 ♜f6 24. ♜f4 ♜e8

‘I would have liked to play ...♜e4 immediately, but I rejected it because of the queen sac 24...♜e4 25. ♜xe6? ♜e8 26. ♜xg5 ♜xd2 27. ♜xf7. I don’t really understand why though, since 27...♜e4 28. ♜h6+ ♙f8, with the point of 29. ♜xf5 ♙f7, wins for Black.’ (Carlsen).



25. ♚c3 ♜g7 26. b4 ♞e4 27. ♚b3 ♜ge7

The queen must be freed for more important matters than the defence of the e6-pawn.



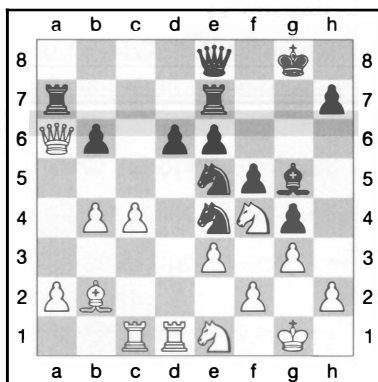
28. ♚a4?!

This attempt to divert the queen to the defence of the queenside weaknesses does not achieve its aim. Kramnik must have taken the reply into account, but underestimated the dynamic potential of the centralised knights. At a press conference after the game Carlsen admitted that he judged the position to be equal or slightly better for White. His intuition did not let him down. As Nigel Short pointed out, the best solution for White was 28. h4!, and since 28...g×h3 29. ♞×h3 is unfavourable for Black, it has to be admitted that the knights on e4 and f4 are of equal value.

28...♞e5 29. ♚xa6?

The strength of inertia is staggering. White should have stopped in good time and returned his queen to b3. Other moves are unsound. If 29. c5?! Black has 29...♞c4!, while after the exchange 29. ♟×e5? d×e5 White loses a piece (30. ♜×d7 e×f4 31. ♜cd1 ♞c3!).

29...♜a7



30. ♚b5

White is forced to retreat. When he made his queen sortie on the 28th move Kramnik overlooked that after 30. ♚×b6? ♜eb7 31. ♚d4 ♟f6! his queen would be trapped (32...♞f3+ is threatened). Now, however, Black transposes into a clearly better end-game.

30...♚×b5 31. c×b5 ♜×a2 32. ♜c8+ ♟f7 33. ♞fd3 ♟f6

Black also has a big advantage after 33...♞×d3 34. ♞×d3 ♟f6, but Carlsen was absorbed in constructing a 'box' for the white king.

34. ♞×e5+

In the event of 34. ♟×e5 d×e5 35. ♜c6 ♞g5 White has no defence against the threat of ...♞h3+ and ...e5–e4.

34...d×e5

'34...♟×e5 was probably better, but in time-trouble I was reluctant to allow 35. ♟×e5 d×e5 36. ♞d3, which however is well met by 36...♟f6 37. ♜f8+ ♟g7 38. ♜d8 (38. ♜b8 ♜d7) 38...♞c3 39. ♜f1 ♜d2! and wins.' (Carlsen)

35. ♜c2 ♜ea7 36. ♟g2

36. ♟f1 is stronger, since White cannot get by without this move.

36...♞g5 37. ♜d6?

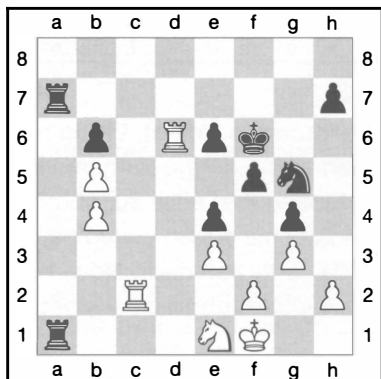


Belated activity. White should have restricted himself to 37. ♖dd2, but all the same the 'box' is slamming shut and the game cannot be saved.

37...e4! 38. ♙xf6 ♜xf6 39. ♜f1

If 39. ♜xb6, then 39...♞a1 40. ♞e2 ♜f3 is decisive.

39...♞a1



Now all the white pieces are tied by the threat of doubling rooks on the 1st rank. On the other hand, ...♜f3 is threatened.

Loss of material cannot be avoided.

40. ♜e2

If 40. ♜cd2 Black wins by 40...♞b1 41. ♜d1 ♜xb4, when 42. ♜xb6 is not possible on account of 42...♞b2 with the irresistible threat of ...♜h3.

40...♞b1 41. ♜d1 ♜xb4 42. ♜g2 ♜xb5 43. ♜f4 ♜c5 44. ♞b2 b5 45. ♜f1 ♜c7 46. ♞bb1

If 46. ♜g2 Black exchanges a pair of rooks by 46...♜c1 47. ♜xc1 ♜xc1 48. ♜xb5 ♜f3 49. ♜e2 ♞e1 50. ♞b2 ♜g5 and puts White in zugzwang, after which he wins with the pawn offensive ...e6–e5 and ...h7–h5–h4.

46...♞b7 47. ♞b4 ♜c4 48. ♞b2 b4 49. ♞db1 ♜f3 50. ♜g2 ♞d7!

Now White cannot avoid the exchange of rooks followed by zugzwang.

51. h3 e5 52. ♜e2 ♞d2 53. h×g4 f×g4 54. ♜xd2 ♜xd2 55. ♞b2 ♜f3 56. ♜f1 b3 57. ♜g2 ♜c2

White resigned.

Carlsen arrived at the main super-tournament of the year, Morelia/Linares (FIDE category 21) as the victor from Wijk aan Zee. But he realised that to achieve such a success here would be more difficult: the evenly strong field did not permit any relaxation – there were no outsiders. In Wijk aan Zee there were, after all, a few players against whom you could hope to win or at least have a respite. But here Magnus did not relax and throughout the tournament he sat on the 'wheel' of the leader Anand.

Curious in this respect is the pen-portrait of one of the grandees of Russian chess journalism, Yuri Vasiliev: 'Magnus, this little mongoose, rising sharply and swiftly over the board, when he needs to grasp the nape of another cobra, is a new super-hero! To win alone, without a trainer, the tournament in Wijk aan Zee, and then to take second place in "double-headed" Linares?! And all this at the boyish age of 17!' In Linares Carlsen's play was dynamic and uncompromising, and, as in Wijk aan Zee, he scored five wins. Moreover, his contribution to the eight decisive games considerably influenced the statistics of the tournament, in which the proportion of draws slightly exceeded 50%. The one to suffer most at the hands of the 'mongoose' was Topalov, who lost both games to him.



Game 35

V. Topalov – M. Carlsen

Morelia/Linares 2008

*Alekhine Defence [B04]***1. e4 ♖f6**

Carlsen was so confident in his powers, that he decided to surprise his opponent with the Alekhine Defence, an opening from his childhood. Nowadays he employs it only in blitz games, and he was successful with it at the 2007 World Championship in Moscow. Nevertheless, in super-tournaments it is not customary to play such openings. How great is the degree of risk? I remember a conversation with Lev Polugayevsky, one of the strongest Soviet grandmasters. Commenting on the fascination for this opening of Vladimir Bagirov, who wrote a book about it, he was categorical: 'An incorrect opening! I don't have the time, otherwise I would refute it'. Knowing Polugayevsky's character and his analytical powers, one can have no doubts about this.

2. e5 ♖d5 3. d4 d6 4. ♖f3

For a long time White tried to refute the Alekhine Defence with 4. c4, but nowadays he does not hurry with this move, preferring to complete his development.

4...dxe5 5. ♖xe5 c6

Preparing the exchange of the active knight, since if 5...♖d7 Black has to reckon with 6. ♖xf7 ♖xf7 7. ♖h5+ ♖e6, when White can choose between 8. c4 and 8. g3 with an attack on the king.

At a tender age Magnus preferred 5...g6, as, for example, against Ian Nepomniachtchi in the World Youth Championship (Heraklion 2002). The game continued

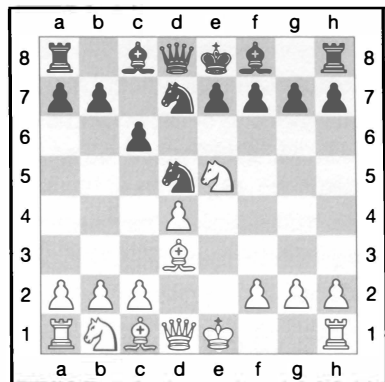
6. ♖c4 c6 7. ♖c3 ♖e6 8. 0-0 ♖d7 9. ♖f3 ♖g7 10. ♖e1 0-0 11. ♖g3 ♖xe5 12. dxe5 ♖xc3 13. ♖xc3 ♖xc4 14. ♖xc4 ♖d5 15. ♖e2 ♖ad8, and Black maintained the balance.

6. ♖d3

At the World Blitz Championship (Moscow 2007) other continuations were tried against Carlsen:

Shirov–Carlsen: 6. ♖c4 ♖d7 7. ♖f3 ♖7f6 8. h3 ♖f5 9. 0-0 e6 10. ♖g5 ♖e7 11. ♖bd2 h6 12. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 13. c3 0-0 14. ♖b3 c5 15. ♖c2 ♖xc2 16. ♖xc2 ♖c8 17. ♖b3 ♖c7 with an equal game;

Grischuk–Carlsen: 6. ♖e2 ♖f5 7. 0-0 ♖d7 8. ♖g4 e6 9. c4 ♖5f6 10. ♖e3 ♖g6 11. ♖c3 ♖d6 12. b3 ♖c7 13. h3 0-0 14. ♖b2 ♖ad8 with complicated play.

6...♖d7**7. ♖xd7**

Five years earlier, playing against the 12-year-old Carlsen (Rethymnon 2003), Emil Sutovsky did not bother to argue and he agreed to an endgame with 7. 0-0 ♖xe5 8. dxe5 ♖b4 9. ♖e4 ♖xd1 10. ♖xd1 f5 11. a3 ♖a6 12. ♖f3 g6 13. ♖d2 ♖e6 14. ♖e2 ♖c7 15. ♖f3 ♖d5 16. ♖d4 ♖g7 17. c4 ♖f7 18. f4, in which White had the better chances.



At the Moscow Blitz tournament Michael Adams retreated his knight – 7. ♖f3, but also without success: 7... ♟f6 8. h3 ♟b4! 9. ♙c4 ♙f5 10. ♟a3 (10. ♙b3 a5! =) 10... e6 11. c3 ♟bd5 12. ♟c2 ♙e7 13. ♟e3 ♙g6 14. ♟e5 0–0 15. 0–0 ♟xe3 16. ♙xe3 ♟d5 17. ♙d2 c5. The game is equal.

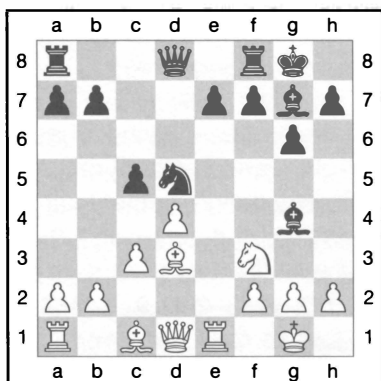
7... ♙xd7 8. 0–0 g6 9. ♟d2

9. ♙e1 ♙g7 10. c3 0–0 11. ♙g5 looks preferable.

9... ♙g7 10. ♟f3 0–0 11. ♙e1

A sound move, made on general grounds, but for gaining an advantage general grounds alone are insufficient, as Carlsen emphasises with his subsequent play. Meanwhile, the presence of the bishop on g7 demands that attention be paid to the d4-pawn, which could have been reinforced by 11. c3 or at least the pin on the knight prevented – 11. h3. In the game Kulaots–Heim (Gausdal 2003) White solved his development problems in original fashion: 11. ♖d2!? a5 12. a3 a4 13. ♖g5 ♙c8 14. ♙d1 b5 15. ♖h4 e6 16. ♙g5. It is probable that Black's play here can be improved, but the main thing is the innovative thinking.

11... ♙g4 12. c3 c5!



In contrast to Topalov, Carlsen's play is specific and purposeful. With this blow at the centre he casts doubts on the opponent's opening conception.

13. ♙e4?!

After the capture of the pawn 13. dxc5 there is the unpleasant 13... ♟xc3! 14. bxc3 ♙xc3 15. ♙h6 ♙xe1 16. ♖xe1 ♖xd3 17. ♟e5 ♖d4!? 18. c6 (the primitive 18. ♙xf8 ♟xf8 19. ♟xg4 ♖xg4 leaves White a pawn down) 18... bxc6 19. ♟xc6, and here there is a choice: 19... ♖d6 20. ♟xe7+ ♟h8 21. ♙xf8 ♙xf8 22. ♖c3+ f6 23. ♙e1 ♙e6 24. ♖e3 ♙f7 when the pawn capture 25. ♖xa7 is risky because of the pin 25... ♙e8, or 19... ♖f6 20. ♟xe7+ ♟h8 21. ♟d5 ♖d4 22. ♙xf8 ♙xf8. In both cases Black has a good game. But the decision to go in for a position with an isolated d4-pawn is also illogical: with the black pieces being very active, this pawn comes under attack.

13. ♙e2 came into consideration, provoking 13... ♙xf3 (13... cxd4 14. ♟xd4 ♙xe2 15. ♟xe2 leads to simplification favourable to White) 14. ♙xf3 cxd4 and at the least White can try to 'muddy the water' – 15. c4 ♟b6 16. ♙xb7 ♙b8 17. ♙a6 ♖c7 (17... e5 18. b4) 18. ♙g5 e5 19. ♙c1.

13... cxd4 14. cxd4

More cunning was 14. h3 ♙xf3 15. ♖xf3 e6 (Black is better after 16. c4?! ♖a5 17. ♙g5 ♟e3 or 17. ♙d1 f5) 16. cxd4 ♙xd4 17. ♙xd5 ♖xd5 exd5 when, compared with the position in the game, White has opened an escape square for his king.

14... e6 15. ♖b3?!

15. h3 ♙xf3 16. ♖xf3 was better, transposing into the variation considered earlier. But it was also possible to play 16. ♙xf3

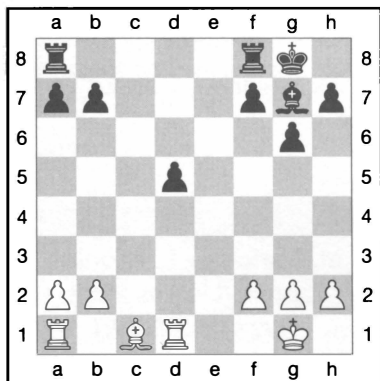


♖b6 (16...♗d6!?) 17. ♙x5 exd5 18. ♙e3!? ♖xb2 19. ♗d3 ♖b6 20. ♖ab1 ♗a5 21. ♗b5 ♖xb5 22. ♖xb5, regaining the pawn.

15...♙xf3! 16. ♙xf3 ♙xd4 17. ♙xd5

White takes play into an endgame, since if he keeps the queens on with 17. ♗xb7 the game clearly goes in Black's favour: 17...♗a5 18. ♖d1 ♖ab8 19. ♗c6 ♖fc8 20. ♗d6 ♖d8 21. ♗g3 ♙xb2. 17...♖b8 18. ♗a6 ♗f6 19. ♖b1 ♖fc8 is also good.

17...♗xd5 18. ♗xd5 exd5 19. ♖d1 ♙g7

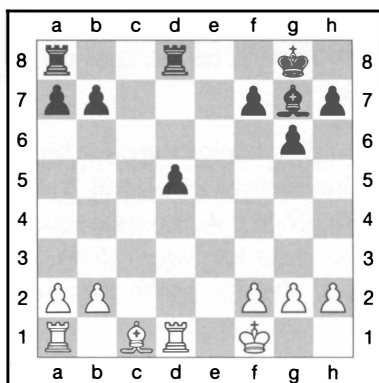


White is a pawn down, and he must regret that he did not go in for the variation given in the note to his 9th move. His dark-square bishop is not developed, and in view of the weakness of his back rank he is unable to regain the pawn: 20. ♖xd5 ♖fd8 21. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 22. ♙e3 (22. ♙f1 ♖d1+ 23. ♙e2 ♖h1) 22...b6 23. ♖b1 ♙xb2.

20. ♙f1

20. ♙f4 ♖fd8 21. ♖ac1 ♖d7 22. b3 d4 23. ♖d3 ♖e8 24. ♙f1 h6 25. ♖e1 ♖xe1+ 26. ♙xe1 f5 27. f3 ♙f7 28. h4 ♙e6 29. ♙e2 ♙d5 30. ♖d1, blocking the pawn, was more resilient, although it is hard to believe that this position can be saved.

20...♖fd8



21. ♙g5?!

Since Black's plans include the ...d5–d4 advance, White must base his play on the blockade of the d-pawn. The move in the game not only does not solve this problem, but also allows Black to carry out the advance with gain of tempo. In this respect straightforward development is insufficient: 21. ♙f4 ♖d7 22. ♖d2 ♖c8 23. ♖ad1 d4, and Black advances his d-pawn: 24. ♙e2 ♙f6 25. ♙d3 g5! 26. ♙g3 ♖c3+! 27. ♙e2 (in the event of 27. bxc3 dxc3+ 28. ♙c2 ♖xd2+ 29. ♖xd2 cxd2 30. ♙xd2 ♙f8 31. ♙d3 ♙e7 32. ♙e4 ♙e6 Black has winning chances in the bishop ending) 27...♖e7+ 28. ♙f1 ♖c6, switching the rook to the queenside (variations by Shipov).

By all the rules of endgame play, it is useful to centralise the king – 21. ♙e2, aiming not only for the blockade of the pawn, but also the exchange of bishops, since in a rook endgame White's chances of a draw are improved. For example: 21...♖ac8 22. ♙d3 ♖d6 23. ♙e3 ♙xb2 24. ♖ab1 d4 25. ♙d2 ♖b6 26. ♙a5 ♖b5 27. ♖d2 ♖xa5 28. ♖bxb2, transposing into a rook ending. Stronger is 21...♖d7!? 22. ♙d3 ♖e8 23. ♖b1 ♖de7 24. ♙e3 b6 25. ♖d2 ♖e4 26. ♖c1 d4!



27. ♔g5 h6 28. f3 ♖4e6 29. ♔f4 g5 30. ♔c7 ♖e3+, when Black should win.

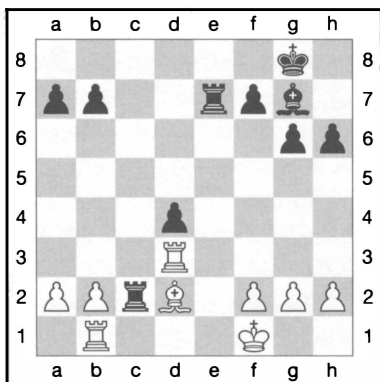
**21...♖d7 22. ♖d2 h6 23. ♔e3 d4
24. ♖d3**

The attempt to exploit the c-file by 24. ♖c1 proves ineffective: 24...♖ad8 25. ♔f4 g5 26. ♔g3 f5 27. f3 d3!. The subsequent winning plan is as follows: ...f5–f4, ...♔e5, ...♔c7, and after the exchange of a pair of rooks the king comes into play.

24...♖c8 25. ♔d2?!

25. ♖c1 was more resilient: 25...♖dd8! (in the event of 25...♖xc1+ 26. ♔xc1 f5 27. ♔e2 the king blockades the pawn on the d3-square) 26. ♖cd1 ♖c2 27. ♖3d2 ♖dc8! (the exchange of rooks 27...♖xd2 is justified after 28. ♖xd2 f5 29. f3 ♔f7 30. ♔f2 d3! 31. ♔e1 b6, when after ...♖d5 Black transfers his king to the queenside, but 28. ♔xd2! with the idea of ♖c1 is stronger, and it is not apparent how to breach White's defences) 28. ♔xd4 ♔xd4 29. ♖xd4 ♖xb2 30. ♖4d2 ♖xd2 31. ♖xd2 b5 32. ♔e2 ♖c3 33. ♖d3 ♖c2+ 34. ♖d2 ♖c4!, after which Black takes his king to the centre with real winning chances.

25...♖c2 26. ♖b1 ♖e7!



The black pieces occupy ideal positions, controlling all the most important lines on the battlefield. The technique for converting the advantage is highly instructive.

**27. a4 f5 28. b3 ♖ec7 29. ♔e1 ♔f7
30. ♖d2 ♖c1 31. ♖xc1 ♖xc1 32. ♔e2
♖b1 33. ♖d3 ♔e6 34. h4 ♔d5 35. ♔d2
♔e4 36. ♖g3 f4! 37. ♖d3**

37. ♖xg6 d3 mate would have been a pretty finish!

**37...♔e5 38. f3+ ♔d5 39. ♔e1 ♔d6
40. ♔d2 g5 41. hxg5 hxg5 42. ♔e1 g4
43. fxg4 ♔e4 44. g5?**

And White resigned, without waiting for 44...♖xe1+.

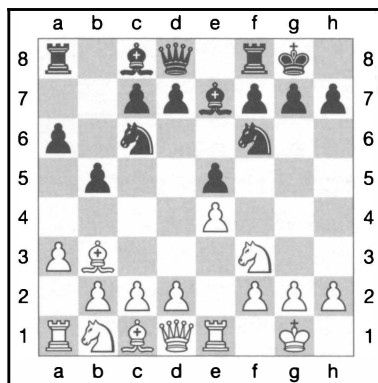
Game 36

M. Carlsen – L. Aronian

Morelia/Linares 2008

Ruy Lopez [C88]

**1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♖c6 3. ♔b5 a6 4. ♔a4
♖f6 5. 0–0 ♔e7 6. ♖e1 b5 7. ♔b3 0–0
8. a3**



Carlsen's favourite way of avoiding the Marshall Attack.

8...♔c5



For a long time the main continuation was the classical 8...d6 (as Shirov played against Carlsen in Wijk aan Zee 2007). But the move in the game is also logical: Black first brings out his bishop to an active position.

9. c3 d6

In the event of 9...d5?! 10. exd5 ♖xd5 11. d4 exd4 12. cxd4 ♙b6 13. ♖c3 Black has a poor pawn structure on the queen-side.

10. d4 ♙b6 11. h3

To maintain the pawn tension in the centre it is important to prevent the pin on the knight at f3.

11...♖e8!?

Aronian's refinement compared with the game Carlsen–Svidler (Wijk aan Zee 2007). Black does not consider it necessary to spend time on ...h7–h6. That game developed as follows: 11. ♙e3 h6 12. h3 ♖e8 13. ♖bd2 ♙b7 14. dxe5 dxe5 15. ♙xb6 cxb6 16. ♖h2 ♖e7 17. ♖g4 ♖ad8 with roughly equal chances.

12. ♙g5

With the bishop cut off from its wing by the d6-pawn, this pin may cause Black problems. He is forced to concede the centre.

12...h6 13. ♙h4 exd4

13...g5 is risky in view of 14. ♙xg5 hxg5 15. ♖xg5 ♖f8 (15...d5?! 16. ♖f3 exd4 17. ♙xd5 ♖e5 18. ♖g3) 16. ♖e3 ♖e7 17. ♖g3.

14. cxd4 g5

After quiet development with 14...♙b7 15. ♖c3 White has a small but enduring spatial advantage.

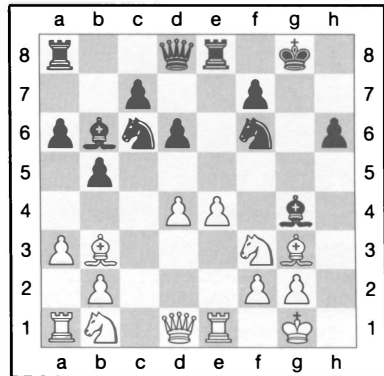
15. ♙g3

Now in the event of 15. ♙xg5 hxg5 16. ♖xg5 the move 16...d5! gains in strength.

15...g4

The e4-pawn is taboo: 15...♙xe4? 16. ♙xe4 ♖xe4 17. ♙d5 ♖e8 18. ♖c2 ♖xg3 19. ♖g6+ (19. ♙xc6? ♙f5) 19...♙f8 20. ♖xh6+ ♙g8 (20...♙e7 21. ♖c3) 21. ♖xg5+ ♙f8 22. ♖xg3 ♖xd4 23. ♖c3! and, despite the material equality, Black's position looks broken.

16. hxg4 ♙xg4



17. ♙h4!

White has lost the opening battle, and with his knight undeveloped he is unable to hold the d4-pawn. Therefore Carlsen renews the pin, not hesitating to sacrifice the pawn.

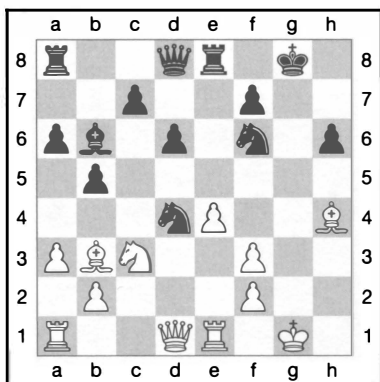
17...♖xd4 18. ♖c3 ♙xf3

It is hard to condemn this move, made after a long think. Aronian opens the g-file for an attack on the king, but carries out the idea incorrectly. He should have taken control of the d5-square – 18...c6!, and if White nevertheless insists on pinning the knight – 19. e5?! dxe5 20. ♖e4, then his king is assailed by the powerful group of black pieces.



es concentrated in the centre: 20...♖xe4! 21. ♕xd8 ♖axd8 22. ♖xe4 (the queen has to be returned, since neither 22. ♕xf7+ ♕xf7 23. ♖g5+ ♖xg5 24. ♖xg4 ♖gf3+! nor 22. ♖b1 ♕xf3 will do) 22...♖xf3+ 23. gxf3 ♖xd1+ 24. ♕xd1 ♕f5 25. ♖e2 ♕d4, reaching an endgame with real winning chances for Black. However, White is not obliged to throw caution to the winds and he can switch to defence – 19. ♕a2 ♖g7 20. ♖d3.

19. gxf3



19...♖h8?

Here the variation 19...c6 20. e5 dxe5 21. ♖e4 can no longer satisfy Black, while the attempt to invade with the queen by 20...♖c8 21. ♕xf6 ♖h3 22. ♖e3 ♖xb3 23. ♖e4 does not promise anything real, apart from perpetual check after 23...♖g3+ 24. ♖h1 ♖h3+.

However, the idea carried out in the game would also have been practicable, but with appropriate refinement: 19...♖h7!? 20. ♖d5 ♖g8+ 21. ♖f1 ♖g4! 22. ♖xd4 (22. ♕xd8?? ♖h2 mate) 22...♖xh4 23. ♖xb6 cxb6 24. fxg4 (or 24. ♖e2 ♖e5 25. ♖h1 ♖f6 26. ♖h3) 24...♖h3+ 25. ♖e2 ♖xb3 26. f3 ♖ac8 27. ♖ac1 ♖c2+ 28. ♖xc2 ♖xc2+ 29. ♖e3 and the storm dies down.

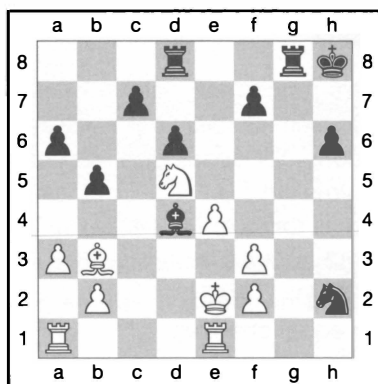
20. ♖d5 ♖g8+ 21. ♖f1

Of course, 21. ♖h1? would have been crazy – the lone king simply cannot hold out against the black army: 21...♖g4! 22. ♖xd4+ ♕xd4 23. ♕xd8 ♖xf2+ 24. ♖h2 ♖axd8 with the terrible threat of ...♖g5.

21...♖g4 22. ♖xd4+

Here is the difference compared with 19...♖h7!? – the exchange of queens takes place with check, and the assessment of the position changes radically.

22...♕xd4 23. ♕xd8 ♖h2+ 24. ♖e2 ♖axd8



25. ♖ad1!

The knight on h2 is doomed, but the bishop's position must be clarified, since if 25. ♖h1 there follows 25...♖g2.

25...♕xb2

Now White wins a piece, practically without compensation, but also after 25...c5 26. ♖h1 ♖g2 27. ♖xd4! cxd4 28. ♖f4 ♖g7 29. ♖xh2 Black is doomed.

26. ♖h1 c6



26...♙e5 27. f4 or 26...♞g2 27. ♖e3 was no better.

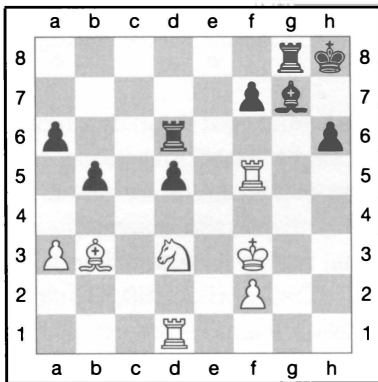
27. ♖f4 ♙e5 28. ♖d3 ♖×f3 29. ♗×f3 ♙g7 30. ♞h5!

Playing to restrict the opponent's mobility. Black has three pawns for a knight, but the white pieces are so active that he has no hopes of saving the game.

30...d5

If 30...♞d7 there follows 31. ♖c5, while after 30...c5 White captures the pawn – 31. ♙×f7 ♞gf8 32. ♞f5 ♞d7 33. ♙e6.

31. exd5 ♞d6 32. ♞f5 c×d5



33. ♞c1!

Excellent technique for converting the advantage – the pawns will not run away, but it is always useful to activate a piece.

33...♞f6 34. ♞×f6 ♙×f6 35. ♞c6 ♗g7 36. ♖f4 ♙g5 37. ♖h5+ ♗h8 38. ♞×a6 d4 39. ♗e4 ♞g6 40. ♞a7

Black resigned.

Game 37

M. Carlsen – V. Topalov

Morelia/Linares 2008

English Opening [A28]

1. c4

A rare move for Carlsen, with the psychological idea of forcing the opponent to play without home preparation. But Topalov is a tough customer!

1...e5 2. ♖c3 ♖f6 3. ♖f3 ♖c6 4. d3!?

Provoking the opponent into a Sicilian Defence with colours reversed. More usually White fianchettoes his bishop – 4. g3, keeping the advance of the d-pawn in reserve.

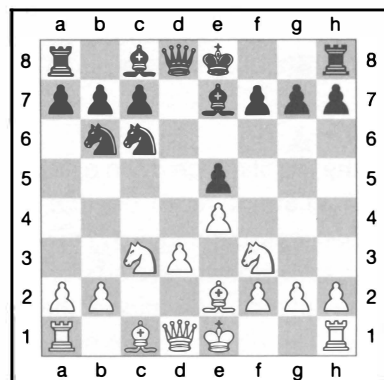
4...d5

Topalov accepts the challenge.

5. c×d5 ♖×d5 6. e4 ♖b6

The alternative is 6...♖f6 7. ♙e2. The game Morozevich–Grischuk (World Championship, Mexico 2007) continued 7...♙g4 8. 0–0 ♙×f3 9. ♙×f3 ♖d4 10. g3 ♙c5 11. ♙g2 0–0 12. ♖a4 ♙b6 13. ♙e3 ♞d6 14. f4 ♖d7 15. ♗h1 ♞ad8 16. ♞c1 with complicated play.

7. ♙e2 ♙e7



A position, typical of the Boleslavsky Variation with colours reversed, has arisen. It should be remembered that in Sicilian-type positions the value of a tempo is quite high.

8. 0-0-0-09. a4

In full accordance with the ideas of the afore-mentioned variation – to drive the knight from b6.

9...♙e6!?

9...a5 suggests itself, but Topalov apparently did not want to concede the b5-point to the knight, which would assist the d3–d4 advance. For example, the game Agdestein–Ivanchuk (Tilburg 1993) continued 10. ♙e3 f5 11. ♖c1 f4 12. ♙d2 ♙b4 13. ♙b5 ♙xd2 14. ♙xd2 ♙h8 15. h3 ♙e6 16. ♙f3 ♙g8, and here 17. d4! is good.

10. ♙e3

The threat is stronger than its execution! For the moment a4–a5 is kept in reserve, especially since the direct 10. a5 ♙d7 11. d4 exd4 12. ♙xd4 ♙xd4 13. ♖xd4 ♙c5, emphasising the weakness of the b3-square, leads to a position favourable for Black.

10...♙d7

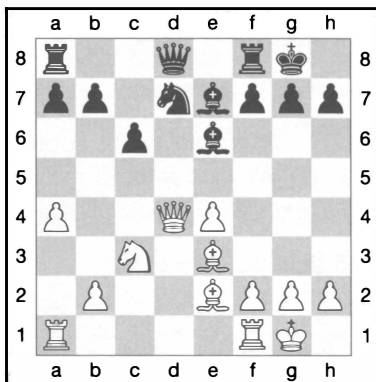
The knight is withdrawn not only for the sake of prophylaxis against a4–a5, but also with the aim of transferring it to b3.

11. d4

This is the significance of an extra tempo in a Sicilian structure. At one time, when the Sicilian was just beginning to become established, the battle for equality was associated with the preparation of the freeing advance ...d6–d5. There was no real point in insisting on 11. a5 in view of 11...♙c5.

For example, Mihail Marin considers the following variation: 12. b4!? ♙xb4 (12...♙b3 13. ♖b1 ♙bd4 14. b5 ♙xf3+ 15. ♙xf3 ♙d4 16. ♙g4 b6 17. ♙xe6 fxe6 is also possible) 13. ♙xe5 f6 14. ♖b1 fxe5 15. ♖xb4 b6, in both cases with a sound position for Black.

11...exd4 12. ♙xd4 ♙xd4 13. ♖xd4 c6



Black has safely got through the opening. White's slight superiority in the centre is of a temporary nature, whereas Black's pawn majority on the queenside is a real positional factor. If he should succeed in playing ...♖a5 and ...♗d8, Black will be able to seize the initiative.

14. a5 ♙c5

This offer to go into an endgame is based on positional factors: apart from his pawn majority on the queenside, Black can invade at the weak b3-point.

15. ♖e5

Magnus is happy to play an endgame, but in the given specific situation he prefers to retain his queen for an attack on the king.

15...♙b3 16. ♖a4

A not altogether suitable post for the rook, but otherwise the a5-pawn cannot be de-



fended. After the interposition 16. ♖fd1 Black forces the exchange of queens by 16... ♖b8, transposing into a favourable endgame.

16... ♖d6 17. ♖h5



17...g6

A cool-headed defence. The threat of e4–e5 with the switching of the rook to h4 is in the air, but Black has time to transfer his bishop to g7, cementing together his castled position. The other way of defending involves 17... ♖c7. However, it is not easy to work out the consequences of the attack after 18. e5!? ♖xe5 19. f4 (the frontal attack 19. ♖h4 h6 20. ♖xh6 gxh6 21. ♖xh6 is parried by 21... ♖fe8 22. ♖h5 ♖g7 23. ♖g5 ♖e5!). For example: 19... ♖f6 20. ♖e4 ♖e7 21. f5 ♖d5 22. ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 23. ♖h4 h6 24. ♖g4 etc. 19... ♖xc3 20. bxc3 ♖fe8 21. f5! ♖e5 22. fxex6 ♖xe3+ 23. ♖h1 f5 24. ♖h4 h6 25. ♖c4 is also unclear.

18. ♖h6 ♖e5

White's threats are vividly illustrated by the variation 18... ♖xa5? 19. e5! ♖e7 20. ♖e4. Now 20... ♖b3 is met by a combination on the theme of diverting the queen – 21. ♖b6! axb6 22. ♖xa8 ♖xa8 23. ♖f6+

♖xf6 24. exf6 and mate next move, and Black also fails to save the game with 20... f6 21. exf6 ♖xf6 22. ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 23. ♖g5.

19. ♖g5!

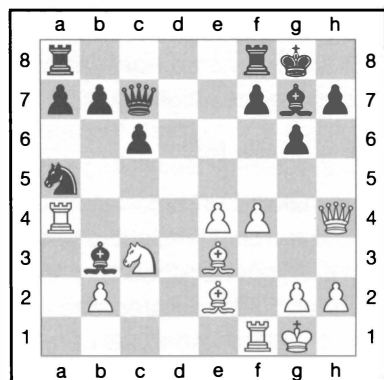
This inconsistency is not typical of Carlsen. True, after 19. h4 ♖g7 20. ♖f4 the offensive would have come to a standstill, since he would have had to reconcile himself to the exchange of queens: 20... ♖b8 21. ♖xb8 ♖xb8 22. ♖d1 ♖d8 with good play for Black. But, apparently, there was no longer anything better – the a5-pawn is too weak. For example, if 19. ♖d1 there can follow 19... ♖c7 20. f4 ♖g7 21. ♖g5 h6 22. ♖g3 ♖xa5, winning the pawn.

19... ♖c7 20. ♖e3

The ability to admit your mistakes is an important quality for a professional. Carlsen returns his bishop to the same square and, although he loses a pawn, as if nothing has happened he continues looking for chances on the kingside. Meanwhile, 20. ♖h4!? ♖xa5 21. f4 ♖g7 22. f5 also came into consideration.

20... ♖xa5 21. f4 ♖g7 22. ♖h4 ♖b3

22...b5! was more vigorous, since now 23. ♖d4 would not have been such a productive idea: 23... ♖c4 24. ♖xc4 ♖xc4 25. ♖fd1 ♖xd4 26. ♖xd4 f5.



**23. ♖d4!**

An excellent move in the psychological sense. One can understand Topalov's feelings. It is not easy for an attack-minded player to decide on the win of the exchange by 23...♙xd4 24. ♙xd4, opening the floodgates in the direction of his king.

23...♞ad8?!

A human is afraid of things that a computer works through without hesitation: 23...♙xd4 24. ♙xd4 f5 25. exf5 ♜d8! 26. ♜f2 ♞xf5 27. ♙g4 ♞f7 and *Rybka* does not see any direct continuation of the attack. It parries the obvious 28. ♖e4 with 28...♞xf4! 29. ♖f6+ ♜xf6!.

24. e5!

Here it is, the triumph of spirit over matter! White's attack acquires a fresh impetus. The way is opened for the knight to f6.

24...♞xd4 25. ♙xd4 c5

There was also a strategic solution to the position: 25...♞d8 26. ♜f2 b6 27. ♖e4 c5 with the switching of the knight to d4: 28. ♙c3 ♖c6.

26. ♙e3 f6

The desire to activate the g7-bishop is understandable, but 26...b6!? 27. ♖e4 ♙c4 28. ♜f2 ♞d8 was also not bad, with the idea of playing the knight to d4.

27. ♖b5 ♜d8 28. f5!?

The pawn makes a breakthrough, although no light is apparent at the end of the tunnel. Since if 28. ♙xc5 Black had prepared 28...fxe5!, White could have prepared it by first playing 28. e6!? ♙xe6 (if 28...♜e7 White attacks by 29. f5 gxf5 30. ♞f3 ♙xe6 31. ♞h3

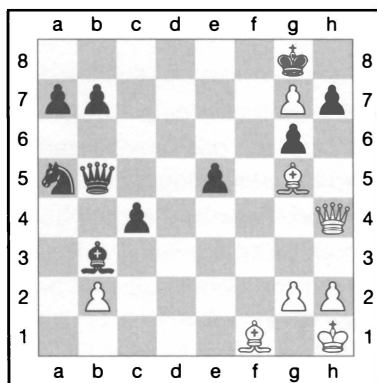
h6 32. ♞g3 ♖h7 33. ♜h5 with the threat of 34. ♙xh6 ♙xh6 35. ♞g6), and now after 29. ♙xc5 f5 30. ♜f2 ♞f7 31. ♙xa7 White regains the pawn, since 31...♙b2?! is dangerous because of 32. ♙b6 ♜d2 33. ♞d1 ♜b4 34. ♞d8+ ♖g7 35. ♙c5 ♜a4 36. ♞a8.

28...fxe5

The capture 28...gxf5 29. ♞xf5 would signify a lack of ambition.

29. ♙g5 ♜b6 30. f6 c4+ 31. ♖h1

An automatic move in time-trouble. 31. ♞f2!? ♙xf6 32. ♙xf6 ♜xb5 33. ♙h5! was stronger, when the bishops gain scope: 33...♜e8 34. ♙f3 ♜e6 35. ♙e4.

31...♜xb5 32. fxg7 ♞xf1+ 33. ♙xf1**33...♙xg7?!**

In time-trouble Topalov decides against leaving his king in front of the 'mine' on g7. Even so, the pawn could have waited. Black should have consolidated his forces, since the a5-knight is clearly out of play. True, he has to return one of the pawns and the position is not completely clear. Here are some variations:

a) 33...♜d5 34. ♙h6 ♖c6 35. ♙e2 ♜f7 36. ♜g4 ♜f5 (36...♖d8 37. ♜c8 ♜e7



38. ♖f3) 37. ♙xc4+ ♙xc4 38. ♚xc4+ ♚f7 39. ♚d3! (39. ♚c1 ♜d8) 39...e4 40. ♚d1 and then h2–h3;
 b) 33...♚d7 34. ♙h6 ♜c6 35. ♙e2!? (35. ♙xc4+ ♙xc4 36. ♚xc4+ ♚f7 37. ♚c1 ♜d8) 35...♚f5 36. h3 e4 37. ♙g4 ♚f1+ 38. ♜h2 ♚f7 39. ♙d7! ♚xd7 40. ♚f6, and the threat of mate on f8 ties Black down (40...♚c7+ 41. ♜h1 ♚f7 42. ♚d6 ♚e7 43. ♚f4 ♚f7).

34. ♙d8! ♜c6??

A blunder in time-trouble. Now Black gets mated. He could have held the position by 34...♚d5 35. ♚e7+ ♜g8 or 34...♜g8 35. ♚e7 ♚d5, when White has nothing more than perpetual check.

35. ♚f6+ ♜g8 36. ♚e6+ ♜f8 37. ♙g5

Black resigned.

After his successes in Wijk aan Zee and Morelia/Linares, the appearance of Carlsen's name among the prize-winners of the strongest tournaments was no longer regarded as a sensation. He also enhanced his reputation at the elite 'Melody Amber' Tournament, which had changed its constant venue from Monte Carlo to Nice. Magnus shared 2nd–5th places, performing equally solidly in both disciplines (blindfold and rapid).

At the first tournament of the Grand Prix series in Baku (FIDE category 19) Carlsen started as the rating favourite. Therefore it was somewhat unusual to see him keeping in the background and playing second fiddle. But Magnus came to the fore in the last two rounds – he won against Adams and Bacrot and shared 1st–3rd places. True, few realised that the turning point in his play had occurred back in the 7th round, when in his game with Radjabov Carlsen took the risk with Black of going into the Dragon Variation of the Sicilian Defence. This was not a one-off action, but a change of conception. The hitherto typically White-biased player began also playing for a win with Black. Magnus, as usual, was modest: 'I simply looked at the main lines in the Dragon Variation and I couldn't understand where Black had problems. The positions appealed to me, and I decided to include this opening in my repertoire.'

The success of the Aeroflot Open festival in Moscow drew the attention of Ukrainian patrons. Starting in 2006 they began organising prestigious all-play-all tournaments in Foros in the Crimea. The resort area, which in not so distant times used to greet the leaders of the USSR, and then by inheritance those of the Ukraine, was selected by the Aerosvit Company, presenting an opportunity for Ukrainian professional chess players to earn some money. In 2008 the organisers were also able to interest Carlsen, by assembling a FIDE category 19 field. The outcome of the tournament was effectively decided in the very first round, when Magnus confidently outplayed Ivanchuk and took the lead, not allowing his rivals the slightest chance. Clear first place with a score of +5 in 11 rounds cannot be called anything but a triumph. On the current rating list Magnus moved up to second place and closed right up on Anand.

Game 38

T. Radjabov – M. Carlsen

Grand Prix, Baku 2008

Sicilian Defence [B78]

**1. e4 c5 2. ♖f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♗xd4
♜f6 5. ♜c3 g6 6. ♕e3 ♗g7**

So, the Dragon Variation, a never-ending dispute in which players of all times and nations have engaged! However many times it has been buried, it has always climbed back onto its feet. Not so long ago (after the millennium), one of the authors of this book, in collaboration with the unforgettable Eduard Gufeld, whose tremendous love for the g7-bishop was legendary, had to raise the entire Dragon in the process of writing a book about this opening. This was by no means a labour of Sisyphus, and rumours about the taming of the Dragon proved exaggerated. And the fact that the brightest representatives of the chess young are prepared to demonstrate this (Radjabov also happily plays this variation with Black) is the best confirmation.

7. f3 ♜c6 8. ♜d2 0–0 9. ♗c4

The main continuation in the Rauzer Attack, where the most recent research has been made. White develops his bishop in an active position, preventing ...d6–d5, which is possible after 9. 0–0–0.

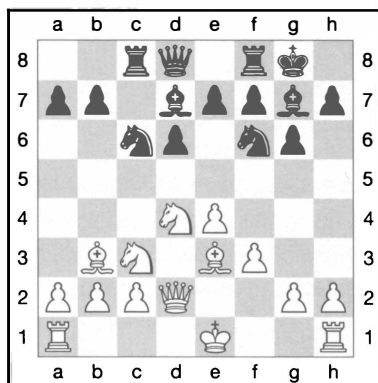
9...♗d7

A flexible move, leaving Black a wide range of options. In particular, he can carry out one of the main counterplay resources – the ...♜c6–e5–c4 manoeuvre – without first developing his queen, thereby saving a tempo.

10. ♗b3

This prophylactic bishop retreat is part of the ‘compulsory program’ of this variation. After 10. 0–0–0 with 10...♗b8!? Black can transpose into the so-called ‘Chinese Dragon’, which Radjabov employed in his game with Carlsen from the Grand Slam tournament in Bilbao 2008. 10...♗c8 or 10...♗e5 leads to the main line of the variation.

10...♗c8



11. h4

An important branch. White does not hurry to castle, but first tests Black’s reaction. In recent times the more restrained development 11. 0–0–0 ♗e5 12. ♗b1 has been in fashion, where White is not in a rush to disclose his attacking plans on the king-side, retaining the option of playing both h2–h4 and g2–g4. For example: 12...♜c4 13. ♗xc4 ♗xc4 14. g4 b5 15. b3!. It is important to disrupt the coordination of the rooks – now 15...♗c5? 16. ♗e6! leads to the loss of the exchange, and 15...♗c8 16. ♗dxb5 ♗a5 17. a4 is also in White’s favour. But it turns out that the rook does not have to move. The game Socko–Stocek (Bundesliga 2006) continued 15...b4! 16. bxc4 bxc3 17. ♗xc3 ♗c7 18. g5 ♗h5 19. ♗c1 ♗c8 20. ♗d3 ♗e5 with sufficient counterplay for the sacrificed exchange.



Apart from the standard plan, also interesting is 12...♞e8!? (with the idea at an appropriate moment of playing ...e7–e5), which Carlsen tried two rounds later in his game with Karjakin: 13. h4 h5 14. ♙h6 ♘c4 15. ♙xc4 ♞xc4 16. ♙xg7 ♜xg7 17. ♘d5 e5!? 18. ♘xf6 ♞xf6 19. ♘e2 ♞c6 20. ♘c3 ♙e6 21. ♘d5 ♙xd5 22. ♞xd5 ♞f4! 23. ♞d2 ♞xd2 24. ♞xd2 f5, and Black maintained the balance.

11...h5!

For Dragon devotees this is the standard reaction to h2–h4, since if 11...♘e5 Black has to reckon with the pawn sacrifice 12. h5 ♘xh5 13. g4 ♘f6 14. ♙h6 ♙xh6 15. ♞xh6 with a dangerous initiative for White.

12. 0–0–0 ♘e5 13. ♙g5

The most usual continuation. White attacks the knight which is preventing g2–g4, and he restricts Black's possibilities. The direct attack 13. ♙h6 ♘c4 14. ♙xc4 ♞xc4 15. ♙xg7 ♜xg7 16. g4 hxg4 17. h5 does not achieve its aim. For example, the game Sax–Kir. Georgiev (Burgas 1992) continued 17...♞h8 18. hxg6 fxg6 19. f4 e5 20. fxe5 (or 20. ♘de2 ♞xh1 21. ♞xh1 ♘xe4 22. ♘xe4 ♞xe4 23. fxe5 ♞xe2! 24. ♞xe2 ♞g5+ with roughly equal chances – Stohl) 20...dxe5 21. ♘de2 ♞h3! with double-edged play.

13...♞c5

This move has the aim of preparing the pawn attack ...b7–b5. In addition, the rook takes control of a number of important points along the 5th rank. If 13...♘c4, then 14. ♞e2 ♘a5 15. ♜b1 is good, followed by an attack on the kingside.

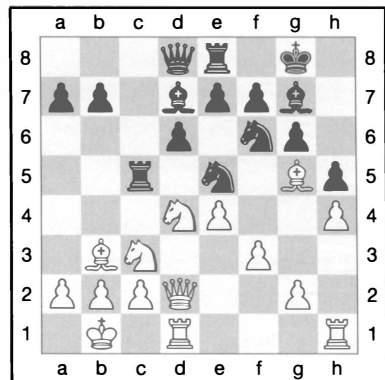
14. ♜b1

A useful prophylactic move. 14. g4 hxg4

and now 15. h5 or 15. f4 leads to very sharp play.

14...♞e8!

A prophylactic move, after which the sacrificial attack, possible after 14...b5 15. g4 hxg4 16. h5 ♘xh5 17. ♘d5 when Black is forced to play 17...♞e8, is now considered insufficient, since in the variation with 14...♞e8 the rook is already in the right place and Black saves an important tempo. However, even in the first case he has adequate defensive resources: 18. ♞xh5 gxh5 19. ♞h2 ♞xd5 20. ♙xd5 ♞b6 21. ♘f5! ♙xf5 22. exf5 gxh3 23. ♞xh5 and now instead of 23...♞c8, which has occurred in practice, consideration should be given to 23...♞f2!? 24. ♞h1 ♞g3 with sharp play.



15. g4!

After the game Radjabov admitted that he had mixed up two lines. Now White is forced to throw caution to the winds. 15. ♞he1 is regarded as the main continuation. But what White had prepared in reply to 15...♞a5 remained a mystery, since extensive practice has not demonstrated anything significant. For example, the game Beliavsky–Kir. Georgiev (Wijk aan Zee 1985) went 16. f4 ♘c4 (after 16...♘eg4? 17. e5! dxe5 18. ♙xf7+ ♜xf7 19. ♘b3 Black

loses material) 17. $\text{♟}\times\text{c4}$ $\text{♞}\times\text{c4}$ 18. $\text{♟}\times\text{f6}$ (the 18. e5 breakthrough does not achieve its aim: 18... $\text{♞}\text{d5!}$ 19. $\text{♞}\times\text{d5}$ $\text{♞}\times\text{d5}$ or 18. $\text{♞}\text{b3}$ $\text{♞}\text{a6}$ 19. e5 $\text{♞}\text{g4}$ 20. exd6 $\text{♟}\times\text{c3}$ 21. bxc3 e6!) 18... $\text{♟}\times\text{f6}$ 19. $\text{♞}\text{d5}$ $\text{♞}\times\text{d2}$ 20. $\text{♞}\times\text{f6}+$ exf6 21. $\text{♞}\times\text{d2}$ f5! with an equal endgame.

15. $\text{♟}\text{h6!?}$ $\text{♞}\text{c4}$ 16. $\text{♟}\times\text{c4}$ $\text{♞}\times\text{c4}$ 17. $\text{♟}\times\text{g7}$ $\text{♞}\times\text{g7}$ 18. $\text{♞}\text{d5}$ leads to a position which occurred in the afore-mentioned Karjakin–Carlsen game.

15... $\text{h}\times\text{g4}$ 16. h5

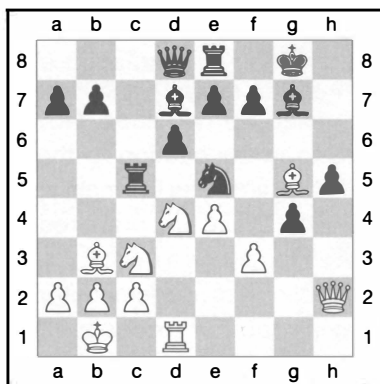
The alternative is to create a breakthrough in the centre: 16. f4 $\text{♞}\text{c4}$ 17. $\text{♟}\times\text{c4}$ $\text{♞}\times\text{c4}$ 18. $\text{♟}\times\text{f6}$ $\text{♟}\times\text{f6}$ 19. e5 $\text{♟}\text{g7}$ (weaker is 19... $\text{d}\times\text{e5?!$ 20. fxe5 $\text{♟}\times\text{e5}$ 21. $\text{♞}\text{de2}$ and then h4–h5) 20. h5 $\text{d}\times\text{e5}$ 21. fxe5 $\text{♟}\text{c6}$ with unclear play.

16... $\text{♞}\times\text{h5}$ 17. $\text{♞}\times\text{h5}$

If 17. f4 Black has several possible continuations: 17... $\text{♞}\text{c4}$ 18. $\text{♞}\text{d3}$ b5, 17... $\text{♞}\text{c6}$ 18. e5 $\text{♞}\text{c8}$ or 17... $\text{♞}\text{f3}$ 18. $\text{♞}\times\text{f3}$ $\text{♟}\times\text{c3}$ 19. bxc3 $\text{g}\times\text{f3}$.

After 17. $\text{♞}\text{d5}$ Mikhail Golubev considers the best to be 17... $\text{♞}\times\text{d5!}$ 18. $\text{♟}\times\text{d5}$ $\text{♞}\text{b6}$ with dynamic play.

17... $\text{g}\times\text{h5}$ 18. $\text{♞}\text{h2}$



In contrast to the position examined in the

note to 14... $\text{♞}\text{e8}$, the white knight is at c3, and Black has a wide choice of defensive measures.

18... $\text{♞}\text{g6!?}$

Now if 19. $\text{♞}\text{d5}$ there is 19...h4. In Radjabov's opinion 18... $\text{♞}\text{b6!?}$ 19. $\text{♞}\times\text{h5}$ e6 is also good.

19. $\text{♞}\times\text{h5}$ $\text{♞}\text{a5}$

Black is obliged to reckon with the threatened capture on g6 (for the moment this is unfavourable – 20. $\text{♞}\times\text{g6?}$ e6), and Carlsen decides to return the exchange, but with a more active position for his queen. Before this 19... $\text{♞}\times\text{g5}$ 20. $\text{♞}\times\text{g5}$ e6 21. $\text{♞}\times\text{g4}$ $\text{♞}\text{f6}$ had been played.

The immediate 19...e6!? is also interesting: 20. $\text{♞}\text{f5!}$ $\text{♞}\text{a5!}$ 21. $\text{♞}\text{h1}$ (21. $\text{♞}\times\text{d6}$ $\text{♟}\text{c6}$) 21... $\text{♞}\times\text{f5}$ 22. exf5 $\text{♞}\times\text{f5}$ 23. $\text{f}\times\text{g4}$ $\text{♞}\text{e5}$ with a sound position for Black (Stohl).

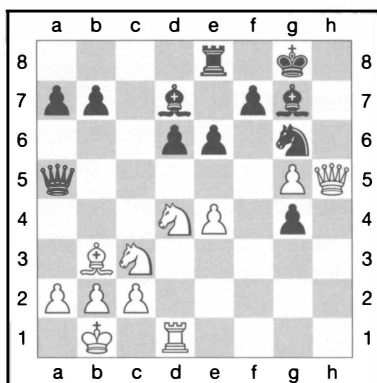
20. f4!

If 20. $\text{♞}\text{d5}$ there can follow 20...e6 21. $\text{♞}\text{h1}$ exd5 22. $\text{♞}\text{h7+}$ $\text{♞}\text{f8}$ 23. $\text{♟}\text{h6}$ $\text{♟}\times\text{h6}$ 24. $\text{♞}\times\text{h6+}$ $\text{♞}\text{e7}$ 25. $\text{♞}\text{g5+}$ f6 26. $\text{♞}\times\text{g6}$ $\text{d}\times\text{e4}$, and White does not have sufficient compensation for the exchange.

20... $\text{♞}\times\text{g5}$

After 20... $\text{♞}\times\text{c3}$ 21. bxc3 $\text{♞}\times\text{c3}$ there is the counter-sacrifice 22. $\text{♟}\times\text{f7+}$ $\text{♞}\times\text{f7}$ 23. f5.

21. $\text{f}\times\text{g5}$ e6





22. ♖f5?

Youth strives only to go forward, but this leads merely to a reduction in White's attacking potential. He should have restricted himself to 22. ♖xg4, although, objectively speaking, the spearhead of his attack has been considerably blunted.

22...exf5 23. ♖xg6 ♕e6 24. ♖h5

The rook endgame arising after the exchanges 24. ♕xe6 ♖xe6 25. ♖xf5 ♕xc3! 26. bxc3 ♖xf5 27. exf5 ♖e4 is in Black's favour (28. ♖xd6? is not possible because of 28...g3).

24...fxe4 25. ♖f1

After 25. ♖d5 Carlsen gives this variation: 25...e3! 26. g6 ♕f8 27. gxf7 ♕xf7 (or 27...♖e7 28. ♖g5 ♕xd5 29. ♖f1! ♖d8 30. ♖xd5 e2 31. ♖e1) 28. ♖f1 ♖e1+! 29. ♖xe1 ♕xh5 30. ♖f1+ ♕f7 31. ♖xe3 ♖xe3 32. ♖xf7+ ♕e8 with an obvious advantage to Black, who has an extra pawn which is also passed.

25...♖e5!

Black pins his hopes on the passed g-pawn – 25...♕xb3 26. axb3 ♖e7 27. ♖xg4 promises less.

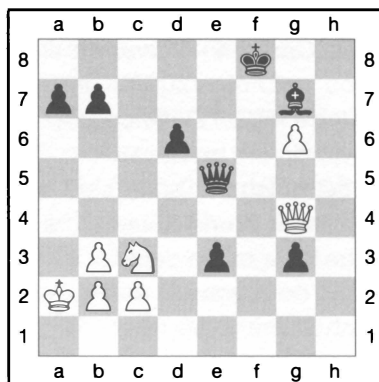
26. ♖xf7 ♕xb3

26...♖f8!?, simplifying the position, is even stronger.

27. axb3 g3 28. ♕a2

With a rather transparent trap: 28...g2? 29. ♖f2! g1♖ 30. ♖f7+ ♕h7 31. ♖h5+ with a draw.

28...♖f8 29. ♖xf8+ ♕xf8 30. ♖g4 e3 31. g6



31...e2?

With this impulsive move Carlsen could have ruined the results of his work. He should first have secured the position of his king: 31...♕e7 32. ♖f3 e2! 33. ♖xb7+ (33. ♖xe2 ♖xe2 34. ♖xe2 g2 35. c3 ♕h6) 33...♕f6 34. ♖xe2 ♖xe2 35. ♖f7+ ♕g5 36. ♖xg7 ♖a6+ 37. ♕b1 g2 and the pawn cannot be stopped. How, however, by playing 32. ♖d7!, White would have successfully 'terrorised' the king: 32...♕g8 (32...♖e7 33. ♖c8+ ♖e8 34. ♖f5+ etc.) 33. ♖c8+ ♕f8 34. ♖xb7 ♕e7 35. ♖h1 ♕f8 36. ♖h7 ♕e8 37. ♖xe2 ♖xe2 38. g7.

32. ♖f3+?

White misses his chance, and the king escapes from the checks.

32...♕e8 33. ♖f7+

White loses after 33. ♖xe2 ♖xe2 34. ♖xe2 g2 followed by the manoeuvre of the bishop to d4 or e3.

33...♕d8 34. ♖g8+ ♕d7 35. ♖f7+ ♖e7 36. ♖f5+ ♕d8 37. ♖a5+ b6 38. ♖d5 e1♖ 39. ♖a8+ ♕d7 40. ♖b7+ ♕e8

White resigned.



Game 39

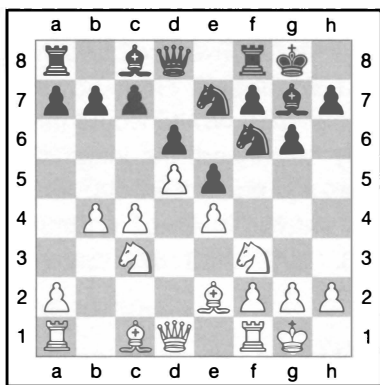
M. Carlsen – V. Ivanchuk

Foros 2008

King's Indian Defence [E97]

This game, which was annotated by Carlsen, enables us to understand to a certain extent the logic of the decisions he takes, based not so much on calculating ability (which some experts consider to be the main reason for his achievements), as on his depth of understanding of chess. This, in our view, is Carlsen's main strength, placing him on a par with the great chess players in the world.

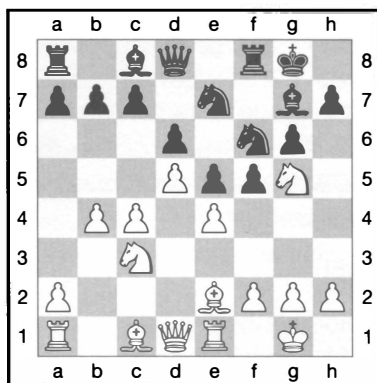
1. d4 ♖f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 ♗g7 4. e4 d6
5. ♘f3 0-0 6. ♗e2 e5 7. 0-0 ♘c6 8. d5
♘e7 9. b4



sound arguments for 10...♘f4. Therefore, before launching the attack with c4–c5, White neutralises this possibility: the rook vacates the f1-square for the bishop. Mark Taimanov, the founder of the Classical Variation, used to parry the threat of ...♘h5–f4 with the radical 10. g3, but ever since the effectiveness of the counterplay with ...f5–f4 was demonstrated, White has preferred to defer this move until better times.

10...f5 11. ♘g5

The knight is aiming for e6, with White displaying his readiness to sacrifice a pawn for the sake of increasing the activity of his pieces.

11...♘f6**12. f3**

'This has become the main line after a lot of van Wely–Radjabov games' (Carlsen). In this sentence Magnus expressed the sum total of knowledge, accumulated in ChessBase – for him the opinion of modern experts is important. But this is also the fruit of the decades of labour by such mighty King's Indian players as Yefim Geller, Eduard Gufeld, Garry Kasparov and Boris Gelfand – the list could be extended.

In the Classical Variation this move is the most popular. This is not surprising. The characteristics of the pawn structure imply the c4–c5 attack by White and ...f7–f5 by Black. The move 9. b4 enables White to get going without beating about the bush.

9...♘h5 10. ♗e1

The modern continuation. At one time they preferred to 'take the bull by the horns' with 10. c5, but it was realised that there were



When conducting plans with an attack on pawn chains, your own chain should be reinforced. If 12. ♖f3 Black can reply by undermining the spearhead of the pawn chain – 12...c6!?

12...♙h8

A useful prophylactic king move, introduced into modern practice by Radjabov. Black prepares for the possible opening of the a2–g8 diagonal in the event of 13. ♘e6 ♕xe6 14. dxe6, assuming that it is dangerous for his king to remain on it.

13. b5?!

‘For some reason I decided against playing the main line – with 13. ♘e6 – and came up with this move instead, which clamps down on the black queenside. It looked interesting to me during the game, but now I don’t like it any more: it’s probably just too slow’ (Carlsen). A typical admission. Magnus is not inclined to think dogmatically, although he undoubtedly knew the prospects for White in the event of 13. ♘e6 ♕xe6 14. dxe6.



Analysis diagram

The dispute in this position between van Wely and Radjabov began in 2005 at the World Cup in Khanty-Mansiysk, when Teimour tried to pick up the pawn with his e7-knight, which is passively placed, by transferring it to c6 – 14...fxe4 15. fxe4 ♘c6.

It only remained to play ...♘d4, but Loek prevented this with 16. ♘d5! (16...♘d4? 17. e7) and after the forcing continuation 16...♘xe4 17. ♕f3 ♘f6 18. b5 ♘xd5 19. bxc6! White retained the initiative. There followed 19...♘b6? 20. cxb7 ♖b8 21. c5! e4 22. ♖xe4! dxc5 23. ♗xd8 ♖fxd8 24. ♕g5 ♖e8 25. ♖d1 ♕d4+ 26. ♖exd4! cxd4 27. e7 and the e-pawn decided the game. But also after the better 19...♘c3! 20. cxb7 ♖b8 21. ♗c2 ♗e8 22. ♕d2 ♘a4 (with the idea of ...♘c5) 23. ♕e3 White, with his pair of passed pawns, has an obvious advantage.

The duel continued in Wijk aan Zee 2007, when Radjabov went for the e6-pawn with his other knight: 14...♘h5 15. g3 ♕f6 (with the idea of ...♘g7) 16. c5 f4 17. g4 ♘g7 18. ♕c4 ♘c6 19. cxd6 cxd6 20. ♘e2 ♖c8 21. ♕d5 ♘xb4 22. ♖b1 ♘c2, after which Black held the initiative and won the game. At Monaco 2007 in their blindfold game van Wely began with 15. c5 and after 15...♘f4 16. ♕c4 fxe4 17. ♖xe4 ♘f5 18. ♕xf4?! exf4 19. ♘d5 ♖e8 Black safely got through the opening. And finally, in Biel 2007, van Wely corrected White’s play: 18. g3!? ♘h3+ 19. ♔g2 ♘g5 20. ♖g4 ♘xf3 21. ♔xf3 e4+ 22. ♘xe4 ♕xa1 23. ♕g5 ♘e7+ 24. ♔g2 ♕e5 25. ♖f4 ♕xf4, when after the faulty 26. gxf4? with 26...d5 Black seized the initiative and went on to win the game. Meanwhile, 26. ♕xf4! would have guaranteed a draw: 26...d5 27. ♗a1+ ♔g8 28. ♕h6 ♘f5 29. e7 ♗xe7 30. ♕xd5+ ♖f7 31. ♘f6+ ♔h8 32. ♘h5+.

13...♘e8

With the same idea of attacking the e6-pawn in the future from g7 (after ...♕f6). Of course, it is also possible to achieve the same aim after 13...♘h5.

**14. ♖e3**

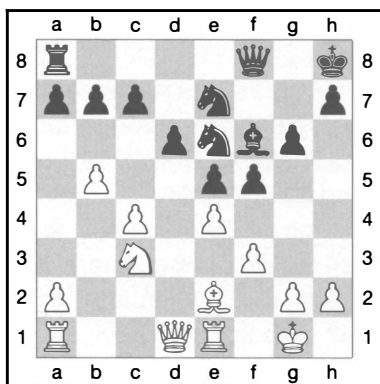
In the event of 14. c5 dxc5 15. ♖e3 Black is not obliged to defend the pawn – 15... b6, since here 16. ♘e6 ♖xe6 17. dxe6 takes place in a situation favourable for White. Stronger is 15... ♖h6! 16. ♘f7+ ♗xf7 17. ♖xh6, exchanging the ‘bad’ dark-square bishop (variations by Carlsen).

14... ♖f6 15. ♘e6 ♖xe6 16. dxe6 ♘g7 17. ♖h6

The possession of the two bishops in the closed type of position after 17. ♘d5 ♘xe6 18. ♘xf6 ♗xf6 is not an advantage.

17... ♘xe6

Otherwise the knight manoeuvre to g7 does not make sense. In the event of 17... ♘g8 18. ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 19. c5! White succeeds in defending his e6-pawn.

18. ♖xf8 ♗xf8**19. c5!**

‘I think this is basically the only move, as the highest priority is to activate the bishop’ (Carlsen). This comment shows the essence of Magnus’s concrete thinking. The main thing for him is the ideal placing of his pieces, for the sake of which he does not begrudge giving up a pawn. With the activation of the bishop, the situation

with opposite-colour bishops is clearly to White’s advantage.

19... ♘xc5

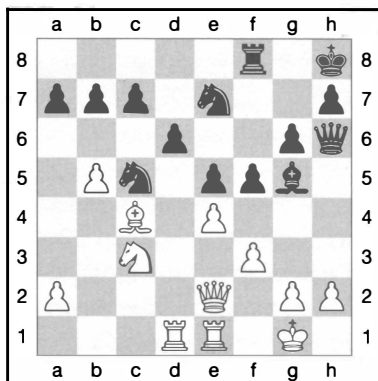
‘After this the knight will be somewhat sidelined. 19... dxc5 was probably better. I intended to continue 20. ♗d7 ♗c8 21. ♗xc8+ ♗xc8 22. ♖c4 with an about equal ending’ (Carlsen). A confirmation of the previous comment. Magnus is objective not only with respect to his pieces. Let us continue the variation with 22... ♘d4, in order to see the difference in the placing of the knight: at d4 it is ‘eternal’, whereas at c5 it is merely traditional and has no future. But let us be honest regarding the natural reaction to 19. c5 – to whom would it occur to voluntarily spoil his pawn structure in a similar situation, if it did not even occur to the non-trivially thinking Ivanchuk?

20. ♖c4 ♖g5

The only way of activating the ‘bad’ bishop.

21. ♗e2 ♗h6 22. ♗ad1

White has managed to restrain the dark-square bishop, by not allowing it to go to e3 or d2. But otherwise White’s achievements are slight: an attack on the queenside for him is just as unrealistic as one on the kingside for Black. The position is one of dynamic balance.

22... ♗f8

**23. a4**

'I was not quite sure if including a4 and ... b6 was a good idea, as the a4-pawn will require constant attention now, but it has to be said that ...b6 is also quite a concession here, as it gives up any dream of ever advancing the pawn centre' (Carlsen). One cannot help agreeing with the evaluation of 23...b6, but as regards 23. a4 Magnus is understating something, and he most probably played this intuitively. This is something we will be able to ascertain.

23...b6?!

It was safer to stick to a waiting course, as in the game – 23...♖h4 24. g3 ♖h3 etc.

24. g3 ♖h3

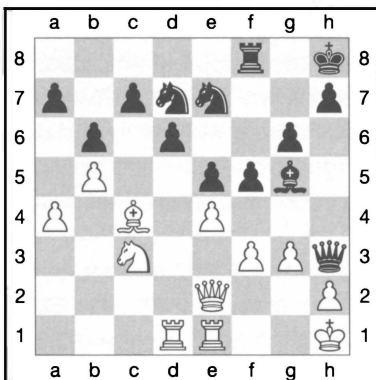
An unpleasant move, preventing the consolidating ♕g2.

25. ♖g2 ♖h6 26. ♖e2 ♖h3 27. ♕h1

The avoidance of the repetition has the aim of dulling the veteran's vigilance. How otherwise can his reply be explained?

27...♕d7?!

Why not sound out the opponent's intentions with 27...♖h6 ?

**28. ♖a1!**

'I believe that the rook is a little better off on a2 than on d1, as it can now support a5, and also go to c2 in some lines' (Carlsen). Here it is, that amazing intuition! Magnus could not have known Eduard Gufeld, and had probably not read his book on the King's Indian published in 2002, but he exactly reproduced an idea of Tigran Petrosian in a similar situation with a bishop on the h6–c1 diagonal, which he carried out in their game from the USSR Championship Final in 1960. Here is the admiring commentary by the loser: 'While I was marking time, Petrosian gave me an object-lesson on the theme that time in chess, as in life, is irreversible. His genius was revealed in the fact that he avoided the 'mined' square c1 (a2–a4, b2–b3, ♖a1–a2–c2, ♖f1–b1–b2) and succeeded in setting up a decisive bind on the queenside. Such a plan was hard to find and highly instructive. "Iron Tigran" simply reduced the board to seven ranks, after which it transpired that my bishop was indeed firing into empty space.' Here you have the young Norwegian's lack of 'schooling'! Not without reason do they say that he absorbs ideas like a sponge.

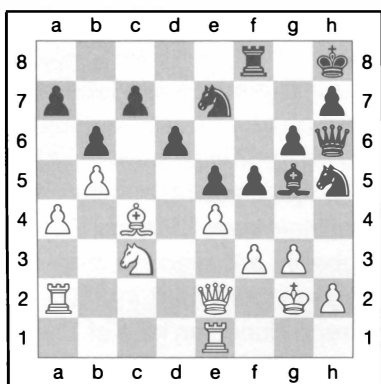
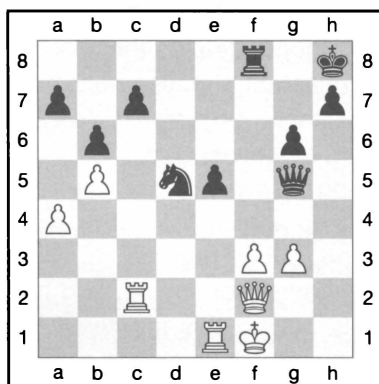
28...♖h6 29. ♖a2 ♕f6?!

Ivanchuk does not sense the danger, which demanded that the knight should return to c5.

30. ♕g2 ♕h5?!

(see next diagram)

Here too it was not yet too late to turn the clock backwards – ...♕f6–d7–c5.

**♖x d5****31. ♖d5! ♖x d5 32. ♕x d5 ♕f4 33. ♖f2**

Was the knight's run worth such effort, if it can be parried in one move?

33...fxe4 34. ♕xe4 ♖g5 35. ♖c2 d5?

Black's play has come to a standstill, but why voluntarily give up material? 35...♖f7 was more resilient, although after 36. ♕b7! with the idea of ♕c8–g4 White nevertheless will force him to declare his intentions.

36. ♕x d5 ♕xg3 37. h×g3 ♖f4+ 38. ♖f1**39. ♖ce2!**

Simple and business-like! The e5-pawn cannot be held: if 39...♖f5 there is 40. g4, while if 39...♖e8 there follows 40. f4.

39...♖f6 40. ♖x e5 ♖x f3 41. ♖x f3 ♖x f3+ 42. ♖e2 ♖f5 43. ♖x f5 g×f5 44. ♖d3 c5 45. ♖e5 ♖b4+ 46. ♖d2

Black resigned.

The uninterrupted series of successes created another wave of interest in the rapidly progressing 17-year-old Norwegian. Carlsen's name was regularly among the first prize-winners at such prestigious tournaments as Wijk aan Zee, Linares, Nice, Baku and Foros – only successes, not a single failure. It appeared that to conquer the summit – a rating of 2800 – only one last effort was needed. Magnus's confidence in his own potential was impressive: he believed that he was capable of anything, and that the limit of his possibilities lay far ahead. However, among the chorus of eulogies, doubts were also expressed about the quality of his play, and it was said that his talent was only of a calculating nature. Numerous cock-and-bull stories were whipped up, such as his lack of 'schooling' with a substitute knowledge of computer dogmatism, and the surprise at how Carlsen had contrived, without reading a single classical chess book, to learn everything.

What can we say? One can merely feel sympathy for the ill-wishers. As for his love of chess, this question is indeed one that appeals only to basic instincts. Questions about the quality of his play also sound rhetorical, since the appreciation of Magnus's masterpieces depends on your own level of chess, and stories about his lack of school-



ing had long ago been refuted by his father. His schooling was at the level of a high-quality expert, and prizes at super-tournaments testify to the marks of the examiners. And besides, can one talk about a lack of schooling, when you have such a mentor as Simen Agdestein? The famous Russian trainer Yuri Razuvaev liked to remember the introductory sentence by Mikhail Botvinnik at a session of his school: 'I must immediately warn you that you cannot be taught to play chess, you can only learn!' Magnus had learned. Independently. There were countless examples of this.

It is clear that the times of the old chess stars are long since gone. Time has moved forward, and technical possibilities have also changed. And whereas in the last century new ideas and conceptions were tracked down literally piecemeal in chess periodicals, in the computer age it would be silly not to use databases with millions of games, processed according to certain criteria. 'It is sufficient simply to click on a few keys,' complains Alexander Khalifman, whose main successes coincided with the start of mass computer usage. 'Based on this, it is completely different qualities that are called for: calculation, memory and energy. Moreover, the key word here is memory! What becomes important is not the ability to look at many positions from various openings, but that all this should be in your head.' One can argue with this. From the existing work with juniors it transpires that many talented players possess such qualities as a good memory and excellent calculation, but only a few make it to the top. It is important not only to be able to calculate, but also to know what to calculate. The main thing here is grasping the depth of chess, understanding the essence of a position, enabling a number of variations to be immediately discarded and not considered. It is not possible to calculate everything. A player's class is determined by his ability to chop off branches of the calculation 'tree' and find the correct continuation. This comes easily to only a few, among them Carlsen. 'I probably have quite a good understanding of chess,' he let slip in one of his interviews. This is where the root of the question lies.

As regards memory, it is worth dwelling on this factor in more detail. Here Carlsen is undoubtedly superior to many of his contemporaries. During his apprenticeship, Agdestein wrote an introductory letter to Garry Kasparov, extracts from which were published in the magazine *64 Shakhmatnoe obozrenie*. This was how he assessed the potential of his pupil: 'First of all, Magnus has an incredible, photographic type of memory, when a page is not read, but immediately imprinted on the brain and instantly assimilated. He remembers not only the game itself, but also where, when and who played it. He is capable of reading a book on a sharp opening during the course of one evening (usually without using a board and pieces) and of playing it the following day even against a strong grandmaster. This explains why he has such a broad opening repertoire. It often seems to me that he can play everything and that in the opening he knows everything. It is well known that in the Sicilian Defence there are several incredibly sharp lines, where White unexpectedly sacrifices a couple of pieces, and it all ends with a better endgame – but suddenly Magnus tells me that all these complications are theory, and he knows about them! This is not



surprising – he literally swallows all chess material.’ We should remind the reader that Alexander Alekhine and Mikhail Tal also had such a memory. And if to Carlsen’s phenomenal memory you add this staggering intuition, plus his absolute lack of fear of the strongest in the world – two important qualities remarked on by the famous trainer Mark Dvoretsky – this says a great deal. Magnus’s potential allows him to hope for a worthy place at the chess summit.

Carlsen was self-sufficient; he acknowledged the strength of the leaders of the chess world, but he realised that he could beat any of them. The only one that Magnus had not yet got his ‘teeth’ into was the world champion Anand – he was the only one whom he had not managed to beat (not counting blitz games). Therefore their clash in Mainz, even in a rapid event, was of particular interest. There was no real battle. After suffering a fiasco in his favourite ‘Dragon’ in the first game, Magnus also conducted the second game weakly. The 1–3 defeat was undoubtedly a blow to his self-esteem. However, there was nothing surprising about this, as rapid-play comes naturally to the quick-acting Anand; here he is the acknowledged leader. As for Carlsen’s failure, there is a limit to everything, and a player can only do so much. The continuous battles at the top level, and with the bar raised high, demanded far more expenditure of energy than earlier.

Magnus arrived in Germany from Switzerland, where he had just played an intense tournament, and he looked very tired. It appeared that the battle in Biel did not herald any sensation. What for Carlsen, a regular participant in super-tournaments, was a FIDE category 18 tournament with a far from stellar field of six grandmasters! He set the pace: he won the first half, and consolidated his success by also winning his second game against the undoubted outsider Pelletier. But when it appeared that the fate of the first prize was decided, Magnus was let down by his maximalism: he decided to win with White against Alekseev. He failed to finish off a slightly better position, and the protracted battle ended with the blunder of a pawn on the 75th (!) move and a loss. This game was the deciding point of Carlsen’s performance in Biel, since a desperate attempt to halt the leader Dominguez with the help of the risky ‘Dragon’ almost led to a second defeat. The outcome was 3rd place with 6 points out of 9. For the time being the storming of the 2800 summit had to be deferred.

Game 40

Y. Pelletier – M. Carlsen

Biel 2008

Queen’s Indian Defence [E15]

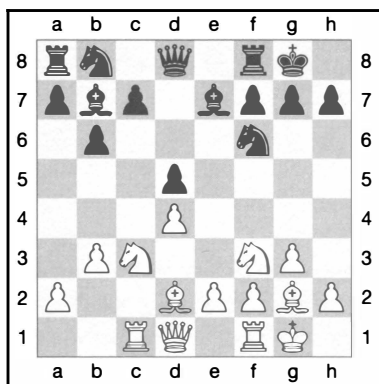
**1. d4 ♖f6 2. ♖f3 e6 3. c4 b6 4. g3 ♗a6
5. b3 ♗b4+ 6. ♗d2 ♗e7 7. ♗g2 d5**

7...c6 is considered the main continuation, but the move of the central pawn also oc-

curs quite often. By turning onto a sideline, Carlsen was hoping to outplay the Swiss grandmaster, who was performing badly in the tournament.

**8. cxd5 exd5 9. ♖c3 0–0 10. 0–0 ♗b7
11. ♞c1**

(see next diagram)



11...Qb1?

In this position the more traditional way of developing is considered to be 11...Qa6 followed by playing the knight to c7 after the c-pawn has moved. Of course, White can counter this. Here the game Aronian–Ivan-chuk (Morelia/Linares 2006) is of interest: 11...Qa6 12. Qf4 Bc8 13. Qe5 h6 14. Qb5!? c5 15. Qc4 (15. dxc5 bxc5 16. Qc4 Qc6 17. Qbd6 is possible) 15...Qc6 16. Qcd6 Bf8 17. dxc5 bxc5, and after 18. Qd2!? (the game went 18. Qd4 cxd4 19. Bxc6 Qb4 20. Qb7 Bb8 21. Bc7 Qa6=) the hanging pawns are in need of defence.

But after the classical knight manoeuvre ...Qb8–d7–f8–e6 (in the style of the Carlsbad Variation of the Queen's Gambit) the knight also assists the undermining of the centre.

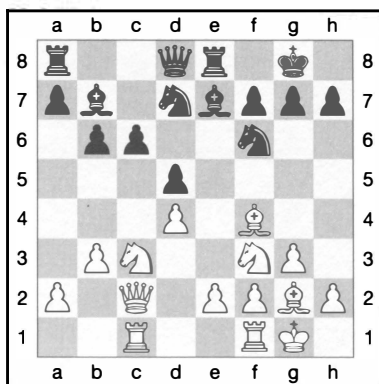
12. Qf4 c6

After the development of the knight at d7 Black is forced to support his d5-pawn.

13. Bc2 Bc8

(see next diagram)

The same position was reached by transposition in the game Aronian–Huzman (Warsaw 2005).



14. Bc1?!

Pelletier follows in the footsteps of Aronian, taking into account the experience of the game van Wely–Leko (Dortmund 2008), where the attempt to stop the c-pawn did not work: 14. Bb2 Qf8 15. b4 Qe6 16. Qe3 Qd6 17. a4 Bb7 18. Bb1 a6 19. Qd2 Bb8 20. e3 c5 21. bxc5 bxc5 22. Bb2 g6 23. dxc5 Qxc5 24. Qe2 Qe4 25. Bfd1 Qa8 26. Bxb8 Bxb8 with equal play. However, what he was hoping for is not clear. After Black's reply it transpires that White has simply wasted a tempo – an obvious hole in his home preparations. Carlsen does not forgive such things.

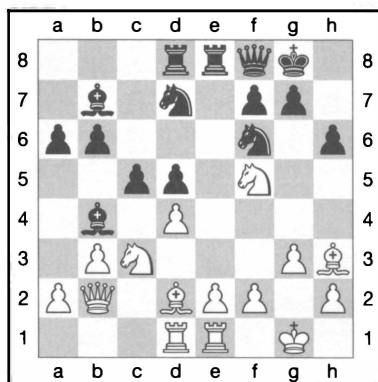
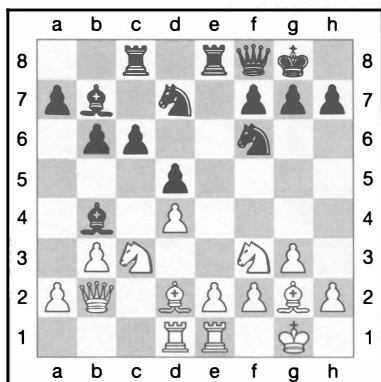
14...Qb4!

With the unequivocal threat of 15...Qxc3 16. Bxc3 Bxe2. The problems are not relieved by 15. Qe5?! Qxe5 16. Qxe5 Qd7!.

15. Qd2 Bc8 16. Bb2 Bb7 17. Bfe1 Bf8

(see next diagram)

As Carlsen himself thinks, in principle this queen retreat is not essential, since the threat of e4 with the idea ...Qxc3 exd5 is not realistic. But he sensed that the opponent was agonising over his choice of



plan, and so for the moment he improves the placing of his pieces.

18. ♖h3 ♜cd8 19. ♚c2 h6!?

Continuing the same waiting tactics. Activity with 19...♞e4 leads to mass exchanges: 20. ♞xe4 dxe4 21. ♙xd7 ♜xd7 22. ♙xb4 ♚xb4 23. ♞e5 ♜xd4 24. ♞xc6 ♙xc6 25. ♚xc6 ♜ed8 26. ♜xd4! with the simplification of the position and a probable draw, which did not suit Carlsen, who was aiming for victory in the tournament.

20. ♞h4

Magnus's tactics have worked. How can White refuse the invitation to go to f5? But with this creeping out of the 'lair' the play becomes much more lively, which in view of the difference in motivation is to Carlsen's advantage.

20...c5 21. ♞f5 a6

The b5-square has to be covered against the possible invasion of the knight.

22. ♚b2

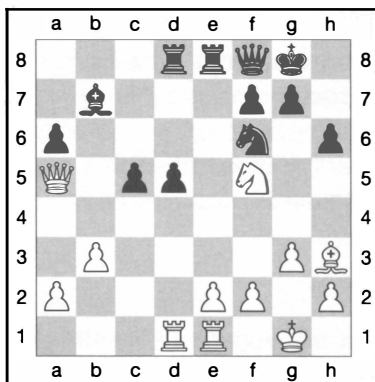
(see next diagram)

22...♙xc3!?

When pawn tension exists it is never easy to make a choice as regards the further transformation of the pawn structure. Should Black go in for an 'isolani' – 22...cxd4 23. ♞xd4 ♞e5, which stabilises the position with the prospect of protracted play, or decide on hanging pawns? Carlsen prefers to complicate matters.

23. ♙xc3 ♞e4 24. dxc5 ♞xc3

25. ♚xc3 bxc5 26. ♚a5 ♞f6



A typical position with hanging pawns. Black's pieces are ready to support their activity with ...d5–d4 and ...♞f6–e4, which demands energetic counter-action from White such as 27. ♜c1!? or 27. ♙g2.

27. ♚b6?



A strange move for a grandmaster. White provokes a pin, which is advantageous for his opponent.

27...♙c8! 28. ♘g2

Only now did Pelletier see that the intended 28. ♘xh6+ g×h6 29. ♙xc8 does not work in view of the interposition 29...♞d6!, when White loses a piece. If 28. f3 there follows 28...♙e6 with the threat of 29...g6.

28...♙e4!

With the threat of ...♙g5. Now White's game goes downhill.

29. f3 ♘g5

29...♙c3 30. ♞d3 (no better is 30. ♞d2 d4 with the threat of ...♙d5) 30...♙xe2 31. ♞e3 ♙xf5 32. ♞3xe2 ♞xe2+ 33. ♞xe2 ♙d3 leads to the loss of a pawn.

30. g4 h5! 31. ♞c1 g6

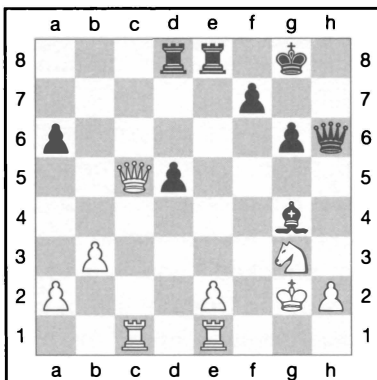
31...♙xh3 32. ♙xh3 h×g4+ 33. f×g4 g6 34. ♙g3 ♞h6+ 35. ♙g2 ♙xg4 was more accurate, in the end leading to a position which occurred in the game.

32. ♙g3 ♙xh3 33. ♙xh3 h×g4+

34. f×g4?!

34. ♙g2 was more resilient.

34...♞h6+ 35. ♙g2 ♙xg4 36. ♞xc5?



36...♞c3?!

There was a quick win by 36...♞c8! 37. ♞a3 ♞xe2+! 38. ♙xe2 ♞h3+ 39. ♙f2 ♞f3+ 40. ♙g1 ♞e3+ 41. ♙g2 ♙h3+ with mate in three moves (variation by Carlsen).

37. ♞d4?

A time-trouble mistake, leading to a rapid defeat. 37. ♙g1 was more resilient, although even here after 37...♞c8 38. ♞a3 ♞ce8 White would also have been unable to resist the pressure.

37...♞h3+ 38. ♙g1 ♞xg3+ 39. h×g3 ♞xg3+ 40. ♙h1 ♙f5

White resigned.

Game 41

L. Dominguez – M. Carlsen

Biel 2008

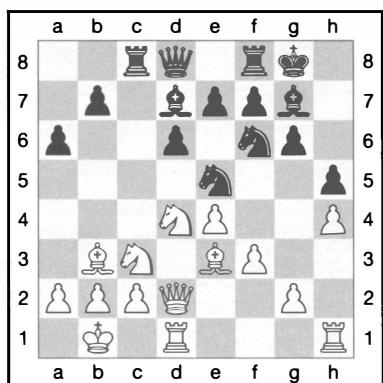
Sicilian Defence [B78]

1. e4 c5 2. ♙f3 g6 3. d4 ♙g7 4. ♙c3 c×d4 5. ♙xd4 ♙c6 6. ♙e3 ♙f6 7. ♙c4 0-0 8. ♙b3 d6 9. f3 ♙d7 10. ♞d2 ♞c8 11. 0-0-0 ♙e5 12. ♙b1

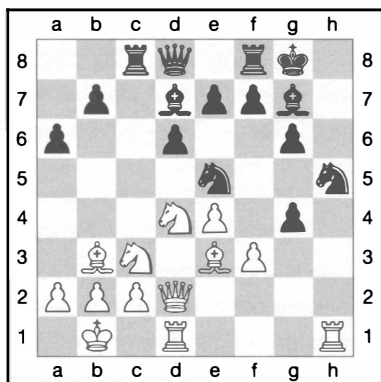
A useful prophylactic move, without which White cannot get by in most branches of the Dragon Variation. White takes his king into safety, inviting Black to declare his intentions. For example, in the event of 12...♙c4 13. ♙xc4 ♞xc4 White can begin an attack with 14. g4!?

12...a6

This move in combination with 9...♙d7 was Carlsen's main weapon in 2008, one which he employed in five games. If 13. g4 Black can play 13...b5.

**13. h4 h5****14. g4**

This flank pawn breakthrough is nowadays a standard plan of attack. Black's defence is eased by the early exchange of the dark-square bishops: 14. ♖h6 ♜c4 15. ♙xc4 ♜xc4 16. ♙xg7 ♜xg7, and here 17. g4 is not so dangerous – 17...hxg4 18. h5 ♖h8. In the rapid game Anand–Carlsen (Mainz 2008) White preferred 17. ♖he1, and after 17...♜e8!? 18. ♜de2 (18. ♜d5 e5! 19. ♜b3 ♜xd5 20. ♙xd5 ♙b5=) 18...♙a5 19. ♜f4 ♜ec8 20. ♜cd5 ♙xd2 21. ♜xd2 ♜xd5 22. ♜xd5 ♖e8 he satisfied himself with an equal endgame. 14. ♙g5 is examined in the game Radjabov–Carlsen (Baku 2008).

14...hxg4 15. h5 ♜xh5**16. ♙h6**

In this variation Dominguez was a pioneer, and it turned out that the exchange of the dark-square bishops was premature. Subsequently the more dangerous continuation 16. ♜dg1 was employed against Carlsen, and his first attempt was a failure. In his rapid game against Anand (Mainz 2008) Magnus played 16...♙a5 and after 17. ♙h6 ♜xc3? 18. ♙xg7 ♜xg7 19. ♜xh5! it was time for him to resign. True, after 19...♜xb3 Anand satisfied himself with the win of the queen – 20. ♙xa5, but he could also have played more forcefully: 20. ♙h6+! ♜f6 21. ♙g5+ ♜g7 22. ♜xb3 ♙c7 23. ♙h6+ ♜f6 24. ♜xe5.

The experiment with 16...♜c5, as played against Topalov in the Grand Slam tournament (Bilbao 2008), also ended in failure. The game continued 17. ♙h6 ♜h7 18. ♙xg7 ♜xg7 19. f4 ♜c4 20. ♙xc4 ♜xc4 21. f5 e5 22. ♜de2 ♖h8 23. b3 ♜c6? 24. ♜xg4 ♜f6 25. ♜gg1 ♜xh1 26. ♜xh1 ♜g4 27. ♜g3 with an obvious advantage to White. And although an improvement was found – 23...♜c8! 24. ♜xg4 (24. ♙xd6 ♙xf5!) 24...♜f6 25. ♜xh8 (25. ♜gg1 ♙e7!) 25...♙xh8 26. ♜g1 ♜c6, when Black holds the position (A. Kuzmin), Magnus did not tempt fate any further. But the Dragon had once again demonstrated its viability!

The main events occurred in the variation 16...♙a5 17. ♙h6 (where Carlsen suffered a disaster after 17...♜xc3?). At the Grand Prix tournament in Sochi 2008 Radjabov shocked Karjakin (and all connoisseurs of the Dragon) with a fantastic double exchange sacrifice.

(see next analysis diagram)



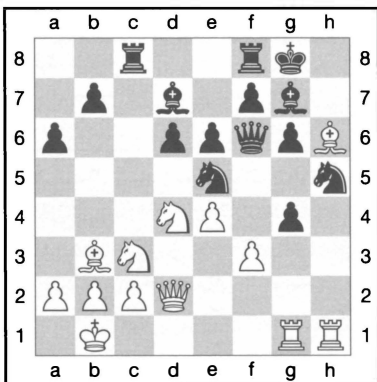
Analysis diagram

17...♔f6!! 18. f×g4 ♕×g4 19. ♕×f8 ♖×f8 20. ♖e3 ♗xc3! 21. ♖xc3 ♖xc3 22. b×c3 e6 and Black gained excellent compensation. Perhaps not sufficient for a win, but the psychological effect was so powerful that Karjakin was unable to save the game.

16...e6?!

This allows White to develop a dangerous initiative. Black should have clarified the situation by exchanging the dark-square bishops: 16...♖h7! 17. ♕×g7 ♖×g7 18. f4 ♖c4 19. ♕xc4 ♗xc4 20. f5 e5, when he would have achieved a good game (A. Kuzmin).

17. ♗dg1 ♖f6



18. f×g4!

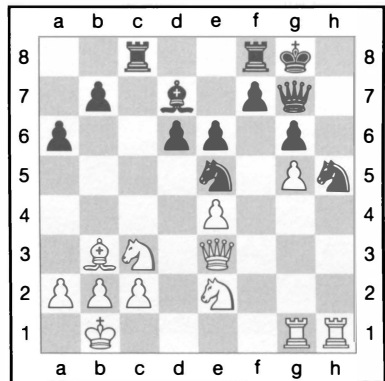
This is where the value of 12. ♖b1 shows itself – White can capture the pawn with

impunity, which would not be the case with his king on c1 on account of the exchange of queens after 18...♕×h6 19. ♖×h6 ♖f4+.

18...♕×h6

Not 18...♖c4?! 19. ♕xc4 ♖xd4 20. ♕d3 ♕×h6 21. ♖×h6 ♖g7 22. ♖e3 ♖f6 23. g5 ♖h5 (after 23...♖e8 24. ♗g4 with the threat of ♗gh4 Black is forced to make a further weakening of his king's defences) 24. ♕e2 followed by ♕×h5.

19. ♖×h6 ♖g7 20. ♖e3 ♖f6 21. g5 ♖h5 22. ♖de2



White's plan of attack is 23. ♗×h5 g×h5 24. ♖f4 with the threat of ♖f4×h5–f6+. Black's counterplay is associated with the advance of his queenside pawns and the exchange sacrifice on c3.

22...a5

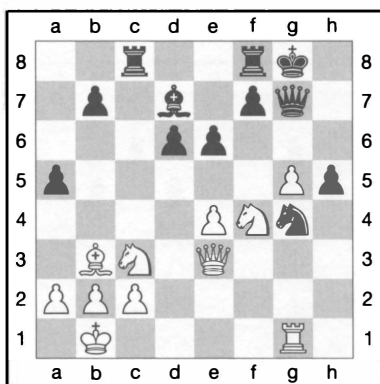
This move is more logical in reply to 22. ♖ce2, whereas here 22...b5 is more appropriate. But in that case too White carries out the same plan of attack as in the game: 23. ♗×h5 g×h5 24. ♖f4 ♖h8 25. ♗h1 with the threat of ♖f4×h5–f6+, whereas Black's counterplay is too late: 25...h4 26. ♖f2 ♗xc3 27. b×c3 ♖c4 28. e5!, blocking the communica-



tions to the king. Now all captures on e5 are bad: 28...♖xe5 29. ♕xh4, 28...dxe5 29. ♕xh4, or 28...♖xe5 29. ♖xh4. However, there is still the possibility of 28...♖c8, attempting to evacuate the king to the queenside.

23. ♕xh5!? g×h5 24. ♖f4 ♖g4

The alternative 24...♖h8 25. ♖h1 h4 26. ♖f2 ♖f8 27. ♕xh4 ♖g7 28. ♕h3 ♖c5 (with the idea of 29. ♖h5 ♖g4 30. ♖f4 ♖xg5) looks more attractive.



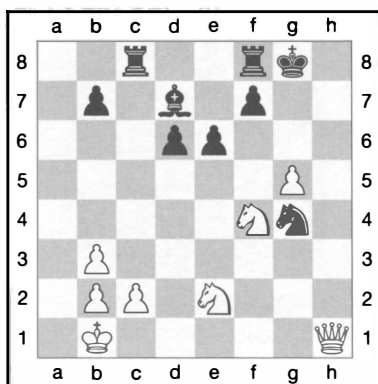
25. ♖h3 ♖d4?

A rare instance of Carlsen playing impulsively. 25...♖xc3 26. bxc3 ♖e5 27. ♖xh5 ♖g6, intending ...♖d8, was essential.

26. ♖ce2! ♖xe4 27. ♖xh5?!

It is not clear why Dominguez rejected the thematic 27. ♖xh5!. After all, even 'by eye' it is obvious that the variation 27...f5 28. gxf6 ♖f7 29. ♖hg3 ♖g6 30. ♖f4 is unable to save Black. He preferred to win the queen, thinking that the king would not run away, but he underestimated Black's defensive resources.

27...a4 28. ♖h1 ♖xh1+ 29. ♖xh1 a×b3 30. a×b3



30...♖c6!

Carlsen does not miss such opportunities. Now he is able to cover his king.

31. ♖h4 ♖e4! 32. ♖c3

Of course, not 32. ♖xg4?? ♖xc2+ 33. ♖c1 (33. ♖a1 ♖a8 mate) 33...♖f5+.

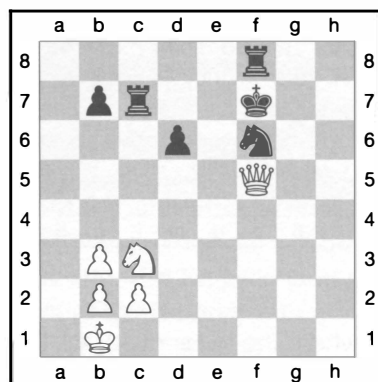
32...♖f5 33. ♖h5 f6!

In amazing fashion Black has activated his position. With the inclusion of the rooks in the defence after 34. ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 35. gxf6 ♖f7 White's attack peters out.

34. ♖g3 ♖c7 35. ♖xf5 exf5 36. gxf6 ♖xf6 37. ♖g5+ ♖f7!

The following was a false trail: 37...♖g7?! 38. ♖xf5 ♖g1+ 39. ♖a2 ♖a8+ 40. ♖a4 ♖f7 41. ♖b5.

38. ♖xf5





38...♖e7

Black begins erecting a ‘fortress’.

39. b4

Not 39. ♖d5?? because of mate in two moves.

39...♞e5 40. ♜f2 ♜d8 41. b3 ♞d7

42. ♜b2 ♞de7 43. ♜b6 ♞d7 44. ♜d4

♞e7 45. ♜d3 ♜f7 46. ♜b5 ♞e7

47. ♜d4 ♜f7 48. ♜f3 ♞h5 49. ♜f5 ♞e6

50. ♜d4+

Having failed to find the key to the fortress, Dominguez forces a draw by repetition.

50...♜f7 51. ♜f5 ♞e6 52. ♜d4+

Draw.

A new tournament – the Grand Slam in Bilbao (FIDE category 21) occupied a special place in the chess calendar. It was organised with a record prize fund for tournaments without the status of a world championship – 400,000 Euros. The idea of the organisers was that those playing in it should be the winners of the main super-tournaments of the year. Those taking part in the first tournament were the winners in Wijk aan Zee, Linares and Sofia – Aronian, Anand and Ivanchuk, together with the personally invited Carlsen, Topalov and Radjabov. A special feature of the tournament was the ‘football’ system of scoring (3 points for a win, 1 point for a draw).

The battle of the ‘big six’ proved highly uncompromising. This was a benefit performance by Topalov, who was striving to demonstrate the rightfulness of his participation in the current world championship cycle (he was facing a match with Kamsky). Veselin won four games, two of them against Carlsen, gaining revenge for the ‘double’ in Linares. The blow to Magnus’s self-esteem was softened by second prize in the tournament: on the tie-break he finished ahead of Aronian. In last place, to general surprise, was the world champion Anand.

Game 42

M. Carlsen – T. Radjabov

Grand Slam, Bilbao 2008

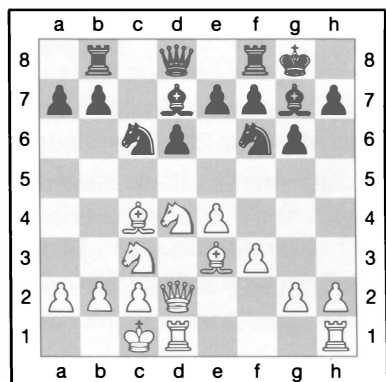
Sicilian Defence [B78]

1. e4 c5 2. ♜f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♜xd4

♜f6 5. ♜c3 g6 6. ♞e3 ♞g7 7. f3 0–0

8. ♜d2 ♜c6 9. ♞c4 ♞d7 10. 0–0–0 ♜b8

(see next diagram)



This is the co-called ‘Chinese Dragon’. The author of this brand name is the Belgian master Luc Henris, who under this title published an analysis of 10...♜b8 in 2002 in the *New in Chess* Yearbook. The

point of this move is to exploit the b-file after the exchange of the knight on c4. At the same time, the main trump of the

'Chinese' is to immediately react to the wing attack 11. h4 or 11. g4 with the pawn sacrifice 11...b5!. It is dangerous to accept it. For example, the game Stanford–Anka (McMinnville 2004) continued 11. h4 b5! 12. dxcxb5 d5e5 13. e2 ♖a5 14. d4 f8c8 15. b3 ♗xb3! 16. cxb3 (16. axb3? loses to 16...dxe4 17. fxe4 ♗a1+ 18. b1 d4c4!) 16...♗xa2 17. ♗c2 ♗a5 with an attack for Black. However, 12. dxcxb5!? d5a5 13. d4a3 is not so clear.

11. ♗b3 d5a5 12. ♗b1

This prophylactic move is best made immediately. After the direct attack 12. h4 b5 13. h5?! (13. ♗b1 d4c4 leads to a position from the game) 13...d4c4 14. ♗xc4 bxc4 15. ♗h6 ♗b6 White is forced to weaken his king's defences. A game Echevaria–da Costa (correspondence 2003) continued 16. b3 ♗xh6! 17. ♗xh6 ♗a5 18. ♗b2 f8c8 19. d4e2 ♗e6 with the initiative for Black.

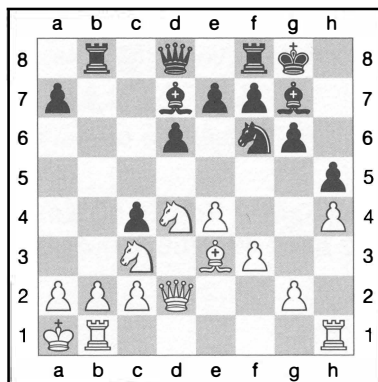
12...b5 13. h4

The effect of the move ...d5a5–c4 can be weakened by 13. ♗h6 ♗xh6 14. ♗xh6, but, as often happens in the Dragon, the early exchange of bishops does not give anything. For example, the game Berg–Evdomikov (Moscow 2007) continued 14...e5!? 15. d4e2 d4xb3 16. cxb3 b4 17. d4a4 (or 17. d4d5 d4xd5 18. ♗xd5 ♗e6 19. ♗d2 ♗b6=) 17...♗e7 18. d4g3 ♗e6 19. h4 f8c8 20. h5 ♗c7 21. ♗g5 d4e8 22. ♗d2 ♗c6 with equal play.

13...d4c4 14. ♗xc4 bxc4 15. ♗a1 h5!

Essential prophylaxis against the h4–h5 attack.

16. ♗b1



The position reached is typical of the 'Chinese Dragon' structure. The last two moves are necessary for the defence of the king. Despite the entire power of Black's heavy artillery, its defences are not easily breached.

16...♗a5

Black must act energetically to counterbalance White's possible attack. Instructive, for example, is the game Efimenko–Charbonneau (Montreal 2005), which continued 16...♗e8 17. ♗h6 ♗h8 18. g4 hxg4 19. h5 ♗a5 20. hxg6 fxg6 21. ♗h4 gxh3 22. d4xf3 d4xe4? 23. d4xe4, and all Black's subsequent efforts proved in vain: 23...c3 24. d4xc3 ♗xb2 25. ♗xb2 ♗xc3+ 26. ♗xc3 ♗b8+ 27. ♗b3+ ♗xb3+ 28. axb3 e5 29. ♗d1 ♗c6 30. d4g5 d5 31. ♗f1 1–0.

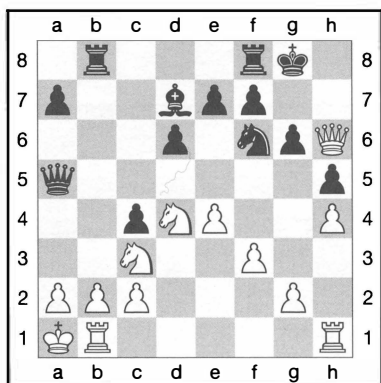
But there are questions. Apart from 19...♗a5, the capture 19...d4xh5 should also be examined. Now 20. ♗xh5 is parried by 20...♗xd4! (20...gxh5? 21. ♗g5+ ♗h7 22. ♗xh5 with a mating attack) 21. ♗xd4 e5. Also 20. fxg4 d4f6 21. ♗g5 d4xg4 22. d4d5 is unclear. And finally, in the game White would hardly have felt so carefree if instead of 22...d4xe4? Black had played 22...d4g4! 23. d4d4 ♗f6.

17. ♗h6



The specific nature of the position is such that the typical pawn attack 17. g4 hxg4 18. h5 ♖xh5 does not have the strength to break through, both after 19. fxg4 ♗xg4, and in the event of 19. ♗h6 gxf3!. In the game Kulaots–Papp (Hungary 2008) White stuck to central strategy: 17. ♖de2 ♖fc8 18. ♖hd1 ♖b4 19. a3 ♖cb8 20. ♗d4 ♖4b7 and did not achieve anything significant. We should add that also nothing is given by the typical tactic 17. ♖d5 ♖xd2 18. ♖xe7+ ♗h7 19. ♗xd2 ♖xe4, when Black regains his pawn with the better position.

17... ♗xh6! 18. ♖xh6



18... ♖b6

Note this manoeuvre. Black intends to double rooks and at the same time he restricts the mobility of the knight on c3 – if White removes the defence from the a2-pawn he gets mated (... ♖xa2+! and ... ♖a6).

19. g4

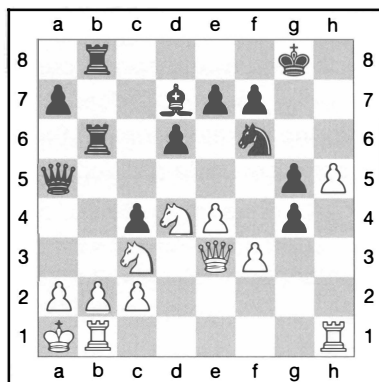
Usually this thrust is followed up with h4–h5, but with the queen on h6 this does not work. But what else can be suggested for White? After all, 19. ♖g5 ♖a6 is too passive.

19... hxg4 20. ♖e3

After the game Magnus admitted that he had forgotten about the typical idea 20. h5 g5!, cutting off the queen. Its release by 21. ♖f5 ♗xf5 22. ♖xg5+ ♗h7 23. fxg4 ♖xe4! 24. ♖xf5+ (24. ♖xe4?? ♖xa2+!) 24... ♖xf5 25. gxf5 ♖g3 leads to an end-game favourable for Black.

20... ♖fb8 21. h5 g5

21... ♖xh5 22. fxg4 (22. ♖f5 gxf5 23. ♖xh5 f4! is not good for White) 22... ♗xg4 is stronger, when the knight on c3 still cannot move, since after 23. ♖d5 ♖a6 24. a3 c3! 25. ♖xc3 (25. ♖xc3? ♖xa3+!) 25... ♖xc3 26. ♖xc3 White finds himself a pawn down.



22. fxg4 ♖xg4 23. ♖d2 f6 24. ♖f3 ♖a6

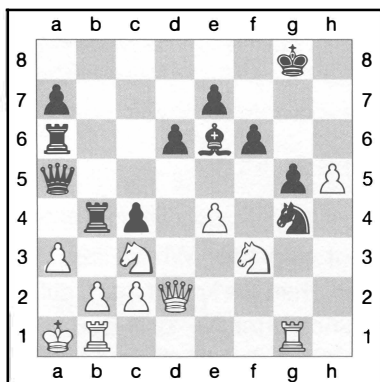
Radjabov is looking for a way to approach the king, but he fails to find one. He should have centralised his queen – 24... ♖c5!, when he is in control of the situation. For example, in the event of 25. ♖d5 c3 26. ♖xc3 ♖e3 Black transposes into a favourable endgame (Notkin).

25. ♖hg1 ♖b4 26. a3

Parrying the threatened double sacrifice on a2.

26... ♗e6

After the game Radjabov suggested the promising queen sacrifice 26...♖a4!? 27. ♕xa4 ♖xd2 28. ♕xd2 ♖xa4.



27. e5!

Sensing the somewhat ponderous nature of Black's manoeuvres, Carlsen resolutely opens up the position, forcing the opponent to solve concrete problems.

27...dxe5

The combination 27...♖xa3+ 28. bxa3 ♖xa3+ 29. ♕a2 c3 is refuted by 30. ♖xg5+! fxg5 31. ♖xb4.

28. ♕xg5! ♖f5

If 28...fxg5 there would have followed 29. ♖xg5+ ♖f8 30. h6 and a piece has to be given up for this pawn.

29. ♕ge4 ♖h7

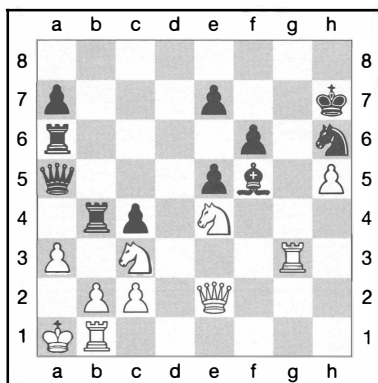
On general grounds it would be useful to remove the king from the danger zone – 29...♖f7!?. The attempt to drive back the knight with 30. ♖g3 would be refuted by supporting it with the rook: 30...♖b8! 31. ♖e2 ♕h6 32. ♖e3 ♕g4 33. ♖g1 ♕h6, and White has to curb his ambitions – since 34. ♖g6? ♖xe4 moves the 'pointer' towards his own king: 35. ♕xe4 ♖xa3+. He also

fails to achieve his aim with 30. ♖e2 ♕h6 31. ♖g2, after which, apart from 31...♖g4 32. ♖d2 f5, Black has an interesting combination: 31...♖xe4! 32. ♖xe4 ♖xa3+! 33. bxa3 ♖xa3+ 34. ♕a2 ♖xa2+! 35. ♖xa2 ♖a4+ 36. ♖b2 c3+ 37. ♖xc3 ♖xe4, transposing into an unclear endgame.

30. ♖e2 ♕h6

The trappy 30...♖ab6?! (with the idea of 31. ♖xg4? ♖xb2!) is dubious in view of 31. ♖f3 ♖e6 (31...♕h6 32. ♕d5) 32. ♕g5+! fxg5 33. ♕e4, when White breaks through to the king. The expiatory sacrifice 33...♖b3 also does not help: 34. cxb3 ♖xb3 35. ♕xg5+ ♖h6 36. ♖f8+ ♖g5 37. ♖xe7+.

31. ♖g3



31...♖e6?

It was essential to help the king – 31...♖b8! 32. ♖g2 ♖h8 (33. ♖g1 ♖b6), since now after 32. ♖g2 ♕f5 33. ♖g7+! Black would have had no defence. But is there any need to comment on time-trouble play? Perhaps only for the sake of establishing the truth.

32. ♖g6? ♕f5?

At this speed of play it is no wonder that a combination examined in the notes to



Black's 29th move was missed: 32...♔f5! 33. ♖g2 ♕xe4! 34. ♖xe4 ♖xa3+! etc., although here the difference in the placing of the kings tips the evaluation in favour of White.

33. ♖g4!

Now Carlsen is in charge!

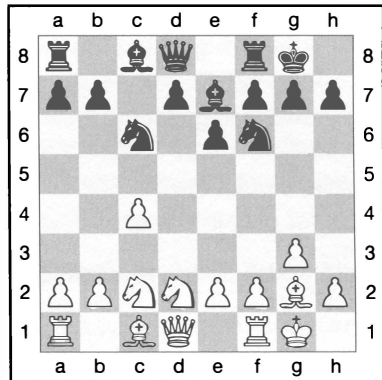
33...♘h4 34. ♘g5+! f×g5

After 34...♘h8 White gives a linear mate – 35. ♔f7+ ♕×f7 36. ♖h6.

35. ♖×g5 ♘×g6 36. ♖×g6+ ♘h8

37. ♖g1

Black resigned.



After completing his kingside development Black has to decide on his subsequent plan, taking into account the features of the position. It is clear that, with his bishop on g2, White will aim to coordinate it with his knights, for which the natural posts are c3 and d4, but for the transference of the knight from d2 time is required. In the spirit of the position is 9...d5 10. cxd5 exd5 11. ♘b3 ♕f5 12. ♘cd4 ♕e4, when with his isolated d-pawn Black's pieces are actively placed for the forthcoming battle. Another plan involves the setting up of a 'hedgehog': 9...b6 10. b3 ♕b7 11. ♕b2 ♖c7 12. e4 d6 13. ♘e3, where White has a spatial advantage.

9...♖b8!?

A new idea. Black is intending to undermine the c4-pawn.

10. ♘e4

White is intending to seize control of the weak d6-point. Another route for the knight comes into consideration – 10. ♘b3 with the idea of 10...b5 11. c5. It is true that this allows Black to develop pawn activity on the queenside, but, without the support of the pieces, this does not come to anything:

Game 43

L. Aronian – M. Carlsen

Grand Slam, Bilbao 2008

English Opening [A32]

1. c4 c5 2. ♘f3 ♘f6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 e6 5. g3 ♕b4+ 6. ♘d2

Before this Aronian had played 6. ♕d2, including against Carlsen in their famous 2007 Candidates match in Elista. True, this occurred in the 11th, blitz game: 6...♕c5 7. ♘b3 ♕e7 8. ♕g2 ♘c6 9. ♘c3 b6 10. ♕f4 ♕b7 11. 0–0 0–0 12. ♕d6, where Magnus played the superficial 12...♘a5?! (12...♘e8 is sounder) 13. ♘xa5 ♕×g2 14. ♘×g2 b×a5 15. e4 ♖c8 16. b3 and ended up in an inferior position. But since that time more than a year had passed – a gigantic distance for the swiftly-improving Carlsen. By defending against the check with his knight, Levon invites Magnus to go in for a 'hedgehog' structure.

6...♘c6 7. ♘c2 ♕e7 8. ♕g2 0–0 9. 0–0

11...a5 12. ♖cd4 ♗c7 (12...♗xd4 13. ♗xd4) 13. ♕d2!? (13. a4 bxa4 expands the scope of the rook on b8) 13...a4 14. ♗xc6 dxc6 15. ♖a5 (nothing is given by 15. ♕a5 ♗e5 16. ♕c3 ♗c7) 15...♗d7 16. ♗c2, and after 17. b4 White blocks the queenside, freeing his hands for play in the centre.

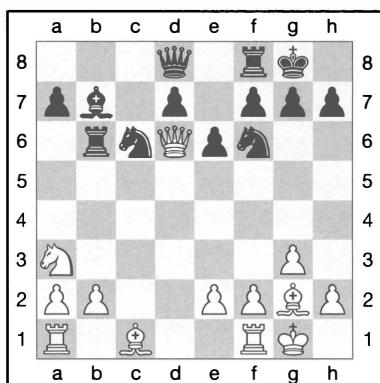
10...b5 11. cxb5 ♗xb5 12. ♗d6 ♕x6

After the rook retreat 12...♗b8 White consolidates his hold on d6 – 13. b3 ♕a6 14. ♕a3 ♗a5 15. ♗e1 ♗fd8 16. e4 with the idea of 16...♗e8 17. e5, and 17...♗xe5? is not possible in view of 18. ♗c4! ♗xc4 19. ♕xe7, winning the exchange.

13. ♗xd6 ♕b7 14. ♖a3

14. b3 ♗e7 15. ♕xb7 ♗xb7 16. ♕b2 came into consideration, retaining pressure on the dark squares.

14...♗b6



15. ♕e3?!

The ambitions of the two players have converged on the d6-point. For the sake of this Aronian is ready to sacrifice a pawn, although full compensation is not apparent. 15. ♗c4 ♗a6 16. ♕d2 (preventing ...♗a5) 16...♗e7 17. ♗d3 ♕xg2 18. ♗xg2 is more

natural, with the prospect of converting the queenside pawn majority.

15...♗xb2 16. ♕c5 ♗e8 17. ♗ab1

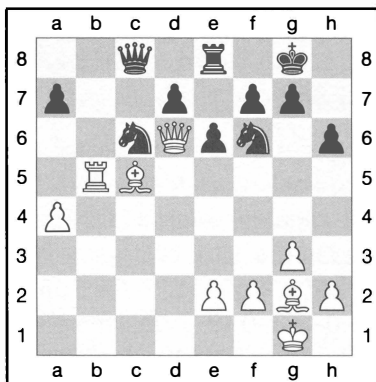
White could have won the exchange: 17. ♗c4 ♗xe2 (not 17...♗b5?! 18. a4 ♗b3 19. ♗d1 ♗c3 20. ♗d6, winning material) 18. ♗d3 ♕a6 19. ♗xe2, but after 19...d5 followed by ...♕xc4 Black would have gained adequate material compensation.

17...♗xb1 18. ♗xb1 ♕a6

18...♕a8 was weaker: 19. ♗b5 ♗b8 20. ♗b3!? with the idea of 20...♗a5 21. ♕xa7, regaining the pawn.

19. ♗b5 ♕xb5 20. ♗xb5 ♗c8 21. a4 h6

It is useful to open an escape square for the king, preparing ...♗a6, which for the moment does not work because of 21...♗a6 22. ♕xc6 dxc6? 23. ♗b8.



22. ♕a3

The logical completion of White's strategy was 22. e4!? ♗a6 23. e5, when the advantage of the two bishops is more apparent. Now the black queen comes out into the open.

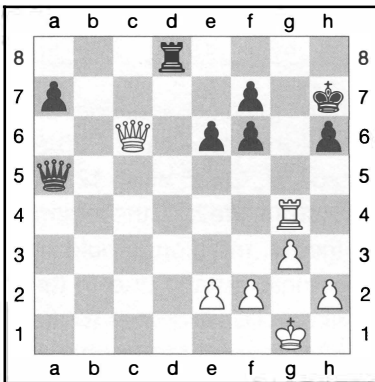
22...♗a6! 23. ♕b2 ♗xa4 24. ♕xc6

**dxc6 25. ♖b4**

Since 25. ♖xc6 a6 26. ♖c5 ♖xc6 27. ♖xc6 ♖a8 28. ♙xf6 gxf6 leads to a rook endgame a pawn down, Aronian prefers to keep the queens on, with prospects of an attack against the somewhat exposed black king.

25... ♖a5 26. ♙xf6 gxf6 27. ♖g4+ ♔h7 28. ♖xc6

The suggestion of Mikhail Golubev was more subtle: 28. ♖d7 ♖f8 29. ♖f4!? and if 29...h5 (cutting off the rook from g4), only now 30. ♖xc6.

28... ♖d8**29. ♖c2+?**

A critical moment. White quite logically aims to provoke the weakening ...f6–f5, but he carries it out inaccurately, allowing an important transposition of moves. It was correct to begin with 29. ♖a4!. Since 29... ♖e1+ 30. ♔g2 ♖d1 is ineffective on account of 31. ♖c7!, the queen would have to move off the important diagonal – 29... ♖b6, and now 30. ♖c2+ f5 31. e4! fxe4 32. ♖xe4 exposes the king, forcing Black to concern himself with its defence.

Chess history knows many examples of the conversion of an outside passed pawn with the same number of heavy pieces – remember the famous 34th game of the Alekhine–Capablanca match (Buenos Aires 1927). But there the king was covered by a continuous pawn chain.

29...f5 30. ♖a4?

Too late, as now the initiative passes conclusively to Black. 30. ♔g2 was better, with the faint hope of 30... ♖e1?! 31. ♖c7, but Black plays 30... ♖d2! 31. ♖a4 ♖d5+ 32. e4 fxe4 33. ♖xe4+ ♖xe4+ 34. ♖xe4 ♖a2, transposing into a rook endgame with an outside passed pawn and real winning chances.

30... ♖e1+ 31. ♔g2 ♖d1 32. ♖c7

32. ♖xa7? ♖h1+ 33. ♔h3 ♖g1 leads to mate.

32... ♔g6!

Played in the style of Steinitz – the king can defend itself.

33. ♔f3!

Aronian is not lacking in ingenuity, and within a couple of moves Carlsen's ambitions will be curbed somewhat.

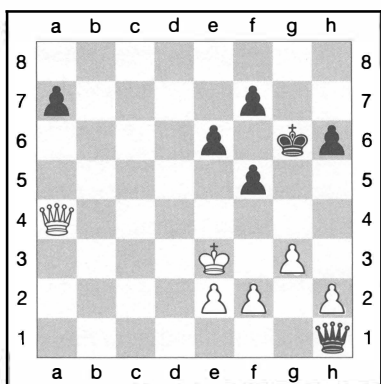
33... ♖h1+ 34. ♔e3 ♖a1!

The kings have succeeded in defending themselves. Magnus offers to take play into a queen endgame.

35. ♖c2

White cannot refuse: 35. ♖c4? ♖a3+ 36. ♔d2 ♖d5+ 37. ♔e1 ♖a2.

35... ♖xa4 36. ♖xa4



36...♔c1+

The transition into a pawn endgame by 36...♔e4+ 37. ♔xe4 fxe4 38. ♕xe4 is for lovers of painstaking home analysis, but, speaking on general grounds, it is unreal to hope to save this ending where the opponent has an outside passed pawn.

37. ♕f3 ♔c3+ 38. ♕g2 a5 39. g4

39. e4 was objectively somewhat stronger.

39...♔e5 40. gxf5+ ♕xf5 41. ♔e8 ♕g6 42. ♔f8 a4 43. e3 ♔e4+ 44. ♕g3 ♔d3 45. h4

It is pointless to play 45. ♔g8+ ♕f6 46. ♔h8+ ♕e7, when the king escapes from the checks.

45...a3 46. ♕h2 ♔f5

Black also wins by 46...a2 47. h5+ ♕f6 48. ♔xh6+ ♕e7 49. ♔g5+ ♕f8 50. ♔f6 ♔d1.

47. ♔xa3 ♔xf2+ 48. ♕h3 ♔f3+ 49. ♕h2 ♕h5 50. ♔f8 ♔f2+ 51. ♕h1 ♕g4

White resigned.

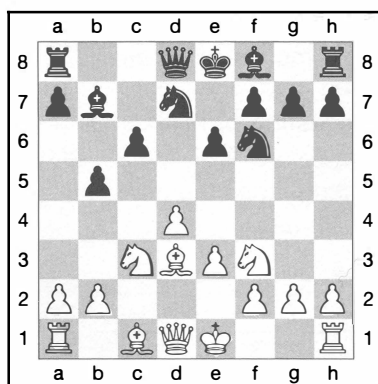
Game 44

M. Carlsen – L. Aronian

Grand Slam, Bilbao 2008

Semi-Slav Defence [D47]

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. ♖f3 ♖f6 4. ♖c3 e6
5. e3 ♖bd7 6. ♔d3 dxc4 7. ♔xc4 b5
8. ♔d3 ♔b7



Currently the main continuation, which has supplanted the classical 8...a6 9. e4 c5 10. e5 cxd4 11. ♖xb5 axb5 12. exf6 gxf6 13. 0-0 ♔b6 14. ♔e2. Of the recent battles on this theme, mention should be made of the Kramnik–Anand duel in the match for the world championship (Bonn 2008), where Black was able to demonstrate an integrated plan of attack on the kingside. The 5th game of the match continued 14...♔b7! 15. ♔xb5 ♔g8! (the most accurate move order) 16. ♔f4 ♔d6 17. ♔g3 f5 18. ♔fc1! f4 19. ♔h4 ♔e7 20. a4 ♔xh4 21. ♖xh4 ♔e7! with complicated play.

9. a3! b4 10. ♖e4 ♖xe4 11. ♔xe4 bxa3 12. 0-0 ♖f6

Black's play is based on nuances. By delaying the development of his dark-square bishop, he hopes to save a tempo in comparison, for example, with the game Aronian–Grischuk (Grand Prix, Sochi 2008),

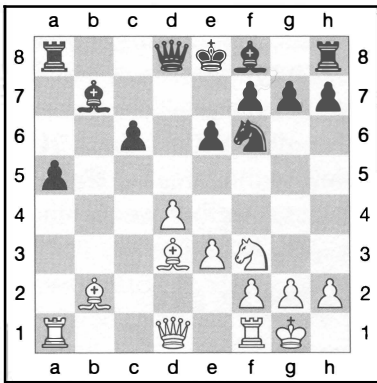


which continued 12...♙d6 13. b3 ♘f6 14. ♘d2 ♖c7 15. ♙f3! ♙xh2+ 16. ♔h1 ♙d6 17. ♘c4 ♙e7 18. ♙xa3 0–0 19. ♙c5! ♖fd8 20. b4 with a spatial advantage for White.

If 12...♙e7 there can follow 13. b3 0–0 14. ♙xa3 ♙xa3 15. ♖xa3 ♖e7 16. b4 with pressure for White on the queenside.

13. ♙d3 axb2 14. ♙xb2 a5

Black is ready to develop his bishop on b4, neutralising White's pressure on the open files on the queenside.



15. d5!

A pawn sacrifice, which characterises Carlsen's concrete thinking style. It resembles his pawn sacrifice against Ivanchuk (Fors 2008). White opens the diagonal for his dark-square bishop, and now the king will be unable to castle. Before this the game Gelfand–Kramnik (World Championship, Mexico 2007) went 15. ♖a4 ♙b4 16. ♙a3 ♘d5 17. e4 ♘b6 18. ♖b3 ♖e7 19. ♖ab1 ♙xa3 20. ♖xb6 ♙b4 21. ♘e1 0–0, and Black maintained the balance.

15...♘xd5

The main idea of the pawn sacrifice is revealed after 15...exd5 (not 15...cxd5?

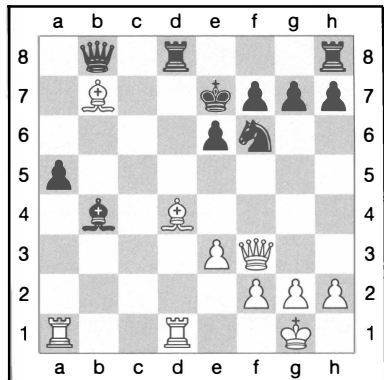
16. ♙b5+ ♘d7 17. ♘e5 with a mortal pin) 16. ♘d4! ♙e7 17. ♘f5, and now in the event of castling – 17...0–0? Black comes under a mating attack: 18. ♘g7! ♙xg7 19. ♖g4+ ♙h8 20. ♙xf6+ ♙xf6 21. ♖f5.

16. ♘e5 ♘f6 17. ♖a4 ♙b4 18. ♘xc6 ♙xc6 19. ♖xc6+ ♙e7 20. ♖fd1 ♙c8 21. ♖f3 ♖b6

Vacating the square for the rook.

22. ♙d4 ♖b8 23. ♙a6 ♖cd8 24. ♙b7!?

By blocking the queen, White prepares an exchange sacrifice on b4, after which the black king will come under the dangerous cross-fire of the bishops. In the event of the direct 24. ♖ab1 with the idea of 25. ♙c5+ Black can either sacrifice his queen: 24...♖he8 25. ♙c5+ ♙xc5 26. ♖xb8 ♖xd1+ 27. ♖xd1 ♖xb8 with a defensible position, or mechanically forestall White's threat: 24...♙d6 25. ♙b7 ♖hd8, preparing the evacuation of the king.



24...h5?

Black has succeeded in coordinating his forces, but this move gives a new impetus to White's initiative. Correct was 24... e5! 25. ♙b6 ♙d6 26. ♖xd6 ♖xd6 (not



26... ♖xd6 27. ♖xa5 with the threat of ♖a7) 27. ♖xa5 ♖xa5 28. ♖xa5 ♖d8, and Black completes his development.

25. h3

If 25. ♖ab1 there follows 25... ♗g4 26. g3 f6, preparing an escape square for the king.

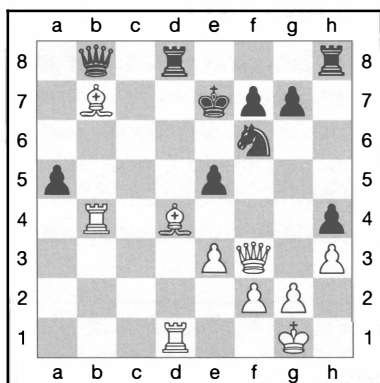
25...h4

Here too 25...e5 should have been played.

26. ♖ab1! e5

Too late!

27. ♖xb4!



27...axb4?

It is hard to comment on this type of carelessness without taking the preceding play into account. It seems incredible that such a powerful grandmaster as Aronian was unable to assess the consequences of White's attack after the obvious 28. ♖c5+. But similar 'black-outs' often occur with Carlsen's opponents, who are unable to withstand the prolonged tension, when they have to find a series of only moves. Now the black king ends up in a mating net and the game concludes quickly. 27...exd4 28. ♖bxd4 ♖c7 was essential, parrying the direct threats, although the ill-considered advance of the h-pawn has seriously compromised Black's position. For example: 29. ♖d5 ♗xd5 30. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 31. ♖xd5, and in view of the threat of ♖g5+ he can hardly avoid a further weakening of his position – 31...f6.

28. ♖c5+ ♗e6 29. ♖a1!

The game is decided.

29... ♖d6 30. ♖xd6 ♗xd6 31. ♖c6+ ♗e7 32. ♖a8! ♖d6 33. ♖xd6+ ♗xd6 34. ♖xh8 b3 35. ♖a6 ♗d7 36. ♖xh4 ♗c5

Black resigned.

At the Olympiad in Dresden Carlsen performed as a genuine leader. He confidently led the Norwegian team in all eleven matches, in which he contributed 7½ points. The entire team also played well and finished in 19th place, its most successful in recent history.

Among the young player's games, special note should be made of the one with the veteran Alexander Beliavsky, in which Magnus was given another master class by one of the outstanding grandmasters from the 'golden age' of chess.



Game 45

M. Carlsen – A. Beliavsky

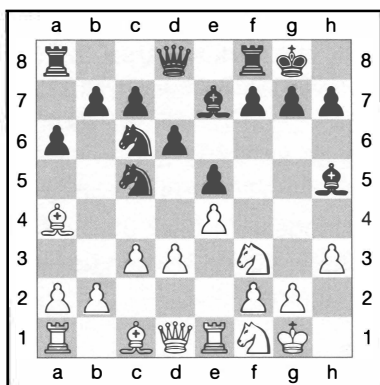
Olympiad, Dresden 2008

Ruy Lopez [C84]

1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♗c6 3. ♗b5 a6 4. ♗a4
 ♗f6 5. 0-0 ♗e7 6. d3 d6 7. c3 0-0
 8. ♖e1

Alexander Beliavsky is known for being faithful to the openings he employs. Therefore in his preparations for the game Carlsen was probably expecting the variation with 8...♗d7, which Beliavsky had employed against him in the 'Rising Stars' tournament in Amsterdam 2006 in reply to 8. ♗bd2, and also in this Olympiad against Bachman, who in fact played 8. ♖e1. But the experienced grandmaster changes course. Besides, the game with Bachman, which developed in very unusual fashion – 8...♗d7 9. d4 exd4 10. cxd4 ♗b6 11. ♗xc6 bxc6 12. ♗c3 a5 13. ♗e3 f5 14. e5 f4 15. ♗c1 d5, left some questions unanswered.

8...♗g4 9. h3 ♗h5 10. ♗bd2 ♗d7
 11. ♗f1 ♗c5



12. ♗xc6

It is hard to surprise Carlsen in the opening.

He undoubtedly knew that after the bishop retreat 12. ♗c2 with 12...♗e6 13. ♗g3 ♗xf3 14. ♖xf3 ♗g5 Black can exchange his 'bad' dark-square bishop and obtain the better game. Indeed, in the immediate future White cannot advance d3–d4, whereas Black has a clear plan – ...g7–g6, ...♗g7, ...♖g5 and the preparation of ...f7–f5.

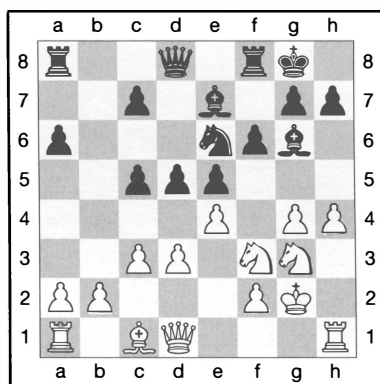
12...bxc6 13. g4

The main line is considered to be 13. ♗g3 ♗xf3 14. ♖xf3 ♗e6 15. ♗e3 c5, where Black has a comfortable game.

13...♗g6 14. ♗g3 ♗e6 15. ♗g2

White delays with the logical 15. d4, and after Black's reply it is no longer a reality.

15...c5 16. ♖h1 f6 17. h4 d5



18. c4

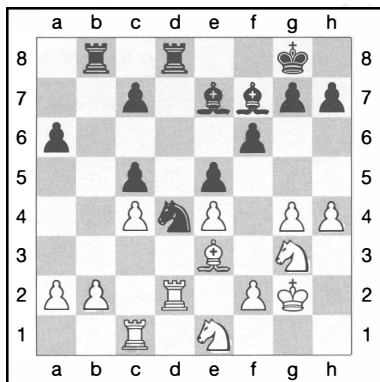
Carlsen recognises in good time that he has not achieved anything from the opening and has even ended up in an inferior position. Therefore he fixes the pawn structure in the centre, realising that otherwise Black himself will play ...c5–c4 and gain control of the important d3-point. But now the d4-point becomes weak, and it may prove an excellent outpost for the black pieces.

**18...dxe4**

There is no point in Black avoiding the exchange of queens (18...c6), since after 19. ♖f5 White has active play on the king-side. In the endgame Black gains control of the d-file, and the attractiveness of the d4-point is not reduced.

19. dxe4 ♜xd1 20. ♜xd1 ♜fd8

This rook, since the f8-square has to be freed in the event of ♖f5.

21. ♙e3 ♜d4 22. ♜d2 ♙f7 23. ♜c1 ♜ab8 24. ♜e1**24...a5!**

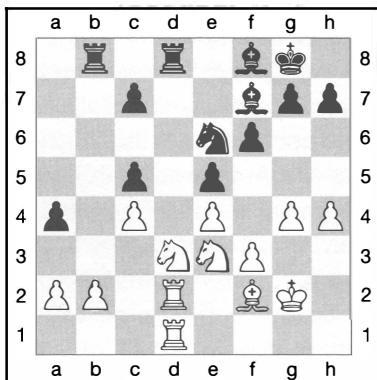
Belavsky gives the young grandmaster a good lesson in strategy. Having established control of the b-file with ...♜ab8 and ...a7-a5, he at the same time weakens the dark squares in White's position.

25. ♜d3 ♙e6! 26. f3 a4 27. ♜f5 ♙f8 28. ♙f2

In the event of the exchange on d4 – 28. ♜xd4 cxd4 29. ♙f2 g6 30. ♜cc2 c5 Black strengthens his centre, and after ...♙d6 he prepares ...f6-f5.

28...♜c6 29. ♜cc2 ♙f7!

The bishop makes way for the knight, exploiting the fact that the c5-pawn is taboo: 30. ♙xc5 ♜xd3 31. ♜xd3 ♙xc5; or 30. ♜xc5 ♜b4 31. ♜xd8 ♜xd8 32. ♜c1 ♜d2 33. ♜xa4 ♜xf2+ 34. ♜xf2 ♜d3+ 35. ♜e3 ♜xc1, and White has to make considerable efforts to regain the knight.

30. ♜e3 ♜d4 31. ♜c1 ♜e6 32. ♜cd1**32...♜d4!**

A move in the style of the ninth world champion Tigran Petrosian. Black displays his readiness to sacrifice the exchange: in the absence of his dark-square bishop, White will have nothing with which to defend the dark squares. 32...♜xd3?! would have been a false trail: 33. ♜xd3 ♜f4+ 34. ♜g3 ♜xd3 35. ♜xd3 ♜xb2 36. ♜d8 g6 37. ♜d1!, and in view of the threat of ♙xc5 Black is forced to give up the exchange: 37...♜xf2 38. ♜xf2 ♙xc4 39. ♜c3 ♜f7 40. ♜a8, when he has a difficult endgame.

33. ♜h2

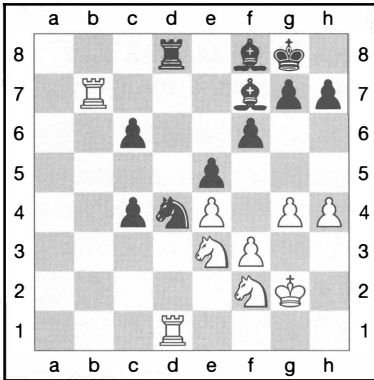
Removing the threat of ...♜xd3.

33...♜bd8 34. ♜d5 ♜xc4 35. b3 axb3 36. axb3 ♜d4!



Nevertheless forcing the acceptance of the exchange sacrifice, as otherwise after ...c7–c6 the pin on the d-file goes into operation.

37. ♖x d4 ♜x d4 38. ♜g2 ♜x b3 39. ♖b2 c6 40. ♜e3 c4 41. ♜f2 ♜d4 42. ♖b7



42...c3?

The 37-year handicap nevertheless means something! After safely reaching the time-control, the tired Beliavsky continues playing 'automatically' and blunders a pawn. After 42...♖a8! he would have had a strategically won position.

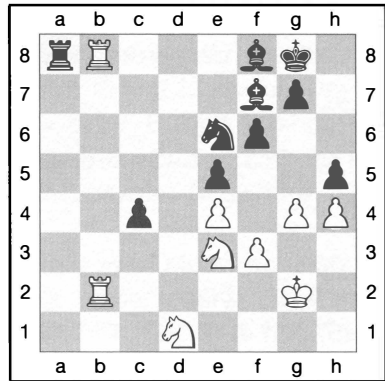
43. ♖d3 c2 44. ♜xc2 c5

A material advantage, although a minimal one, is now on White's side. Beliavsky faces a difficult struggle for a draw, in which he successfully demonstrates his defensive mastery.

45. ♖d2 ♖a8 46. ♜e3 c4 47. ♜fd1 ♜e6 48. ♖db2

48. ♜d5!? was more energetic, with the idea after 48...♜d4 of playing 49. ♖db2, intending the exchange of rooks, and in the event of 49...♜x d5 50. exd5 Black has to reckon with the passed d-pawn.

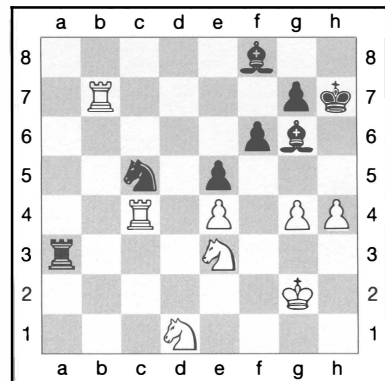
48...h5 49. ♖b8



49...♖a3!

In an endgame the exchange down, it is important to retain the rook to create counterplay.

50. ♖c8 h×g4 51. f×g4 ♜h7 52. ♖b7 ♜g6 53. ♖xc4 ♜c5



54. ♖bb4

54. ♖b8! ♜d6 55. ♖c8 was stronger. For example, 55...♜xe4+?! does not work in view of 56. ♜g3 with the threat of ♖xc5. 55...♖a2+ 56. ♜f3 (56. ♜g1 ♖a5 57. ♜f2 ♜e6 58. ♜f5 is also interesting) 56...♜b3 is safer, but here White can return the ex-

change by playing 57. ♖c3 (57. ♗g3 ♖d2 58. ♖c2 ♖xc2 59. ♖xc2 ♖xe4+ leads to a reduction in the material) 57...♖d2+ 58. ♗e2 ♖b2 59. ♗d3 with dangerous threats.

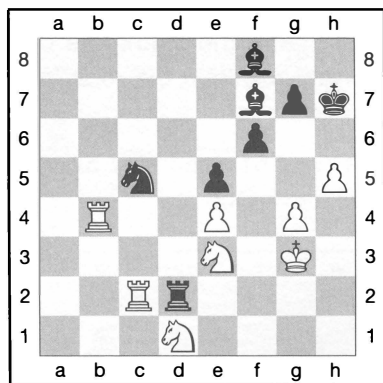
54...♖a2+

54...♗f7 55. ♖c3 ♖a1 was stronger.

55. ♗g3

Black's defence would have been more difficult after 55. ♗f3!? ♖e6 56. ♖c3 ♖h2 57. ♖b8 (57. h5? ♖g5+) 57...♖h3+ 58. ♗e2 ♗c5 59. ♖f5.

55...♖d2 56. h5 ♗f7 57. ♖c2



57...♖d4!

An accurately-calculated exchanging operation with a reduction in the number of

pawns, in which by some miracle the d3-pawn survives. 57...♖d3!? 58. ♖e2 g6 looks more prosaic, but perfectly sound.

58. ♖xd4 exd4 59. ♖f5 d3 60. ♖b2 ♖xe4+ 61. ♗f4 ♖c5 62. ♖f2 g6

The number of pawns is inexorably reduced.

63. hxg6+ ♗xg6 64. ♗e3 ♗e6

65. ♖h4+ ♗g5 66. ♖f3+ ♗g6 67. ♖b6 ♗f7

After 67...♗h6+ 68. ♗d4 d2 the passed d-pawn continues to survive: 69. ♖c6 (69. ♖b1 ♖d7 70. ♗d3 ♖c5+ 71. ♗d4 ♖d7) 69...♖b3+ 70. ♗c3 ♖d5 71. ♖h4+ ♗g5 72. ♖d6 ♗b7! 73. ♖f5 (73. ♖b6 ♖c5) 73...♗f8 74. ♖d7 ♖c5, and now 75. ♖xd2 ♖e4+ 76. ♖xe4+ ♗xe4 leads to the loss of the last pawn.

68. ♖c6 ♖d7 69. ♖c7 ♗e8 70. ♖d4 ♗h6+ 71. ♗f3 ♖e6 72. ♖xe6 ♗xe6 73. ♖xd3 f5 74. gxh5 ♗xf5

Already here peace could have been concluded.

75. ♖e5 ♗f8 76. ♖a7 ♖d6 77. ♖c4 ♗h2 78. ♖e3 ♖d7 79. ♗e4 ♗g1 80. ♖a8+ ♗f7 81. ♖a7

Draw.

The year 2009 began in an unusual way for Carlsen. The Norwegian's admirers were surprised by his peaceableness at the super-tournament in Wijk aan Zee (FIDE category 19). It seemed that this was the very time to build on the success of the previous year, since for various reasons the main favourites for the chess crown had declined to play in the tournament: Anand, Kramnik and Topalov. But alongside Carlsen's name in the tournament table a depressing series of 'half-points' appeared. However, it was clear to the experts that the reasons were of a personal nature. It is well known that Carlsen never plays deliberately for a draw, as indicated at the least by the length of his games. One of the reasons for such



an occurrence was his greatly increased prestige: opponents began playing more cautiously against him. But there were also some notable set-backs. Playing 'by technique' in the endgame did not always work, as, for example, in heavy piece endings with Radjabov and Karjakin, which by their protracted nature resembled individual games. Nevertheless, by winning in rounds 10 and 12 against Dominguez and Smeets, Carlsen joined the battle for the first prize. But his strength was on the wane, and in the last round he was outplayed by Wang Yue. Compared with the fairy-tale previous year, his final score of +1 with ten draws and a share of 5th–6th places looked very modest indeed.

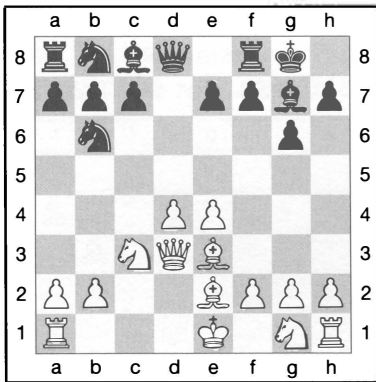
Game 46

M. Carlsen – L. Dominguez

Wijk aan Zee 2009

Grünfeld Defence [D81]

**1. d4 ♖f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 d5 4. ♜b3
dxc4 5. ♜xc4 ♗g7 6. e4 0–0 7. ♗e2
♞f7 8. ♗e3 ♞b6 9. ♜d3**



9...f5

Dominguez tries to carry out this idea more accurately than in his game with Kramnik from the Olympiad in Dresden, where he played 9...♞c6 10. ♗d1 f5.

10. ♗d1 f4 11. ♗c1 e5 12. d5

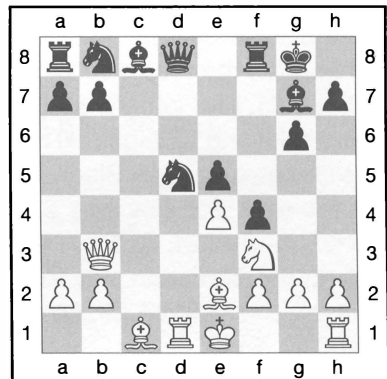
The critical continuation. This pawn has the prospect of becoming passed. The featureless 12. ♞f3 exd4 13. ♞xd4 c5 14. ♞db5

♜xd3 15. ♗xd3 ♞c6 16. 0–0 ♞e5 gives Black an easy game.

12...c6 13. ♞f3

For the moment it is too early to separate the d-pawn from its base. In the event of 13. d6 ♗e6 14. ♞f3 ♜f6 Black is threatening to surround it: 15. ♜c2 ♗d8 16. 0–0 ♞c8.

13...cxd5 14. ♞xd5 ♞xd5 15. ♜b3



This was undoubtedly prepared at home. The exchange of queens, carried out in the game Jakovenko–Mamedyarov (Grand Prix, Elista 2008), did not give White anything: 15. ♜xd5+ ♜xd5 16. exd5 ♗f5 17. 0–0 ♞d7. Carlsen is not against the queen exchange, but in a better version. For example: 15...♜b6 16. ♗c4 ♜xb3 17. ♗xb3 ♞c6 18. ♗xd5+ ♗h8 19. h3.

15...♗h8



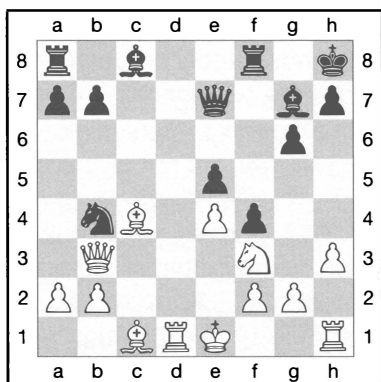
The pawn sacrifice 15...♙e6 16. exd5 ♖f7 17. ♜xb7 ♜d7 looks promising, but after Carlsen's meteoric rise the psychological approach of his opponents was already different. For example, after 18. d6 ♙xa2 19. 0-0 ♙e6 20. ♜fe1 the white pieces co-ordinate very harmoniously, and the d6-pawn may cause Black certain problems. Dominguez sensibly prefers not to throw caution to the winds and to retain a stable position.

16. ♙c4 ♜c6 17. ♙xd5 ♜e7 18. h3 ♜b4

The alternative was 18...♜d4 19. ♜xd4 exd4 20. ♜d3 (20. 0-0? f3) 20...♙f5 21. ♜xb7 ♜e5! with good compensation for the pawn. For example: 22. 0-0 (22. ♜f3 g5 looks unnatural) 22...♜ab8 23. ♜xa7 ♙xe4 24. ♙xe4 ♜xe4 25. ♜a3 ♜a8 etc.

19. ♙c4

Carlsen avoids the exchange of his active bishop, overlooking Black's reply. Meanwhile, after the simple 19. 0-0 ♜xd5 20. exd5 ♜f7 21. ♜fe1 (otherwise there follows the blockading ♜f3-g5-e4) 21...♜f5 22. d6 this pawn causes Black considerable problems. For example: 22...♜b8 23. ♜c3 (23. ♙d2 e4 24. ♙c3! exf3 25. ♜e7 is tempting, but Black can play 23...♙e6) 23...♙e6 24. ♜xe5! ♙xe5 25. ♜xe5 ♜g8 26. d7 ♜f6 27. ♜c7.



19...b5!

Now Black solves his opening problems.

20. ♙xb5

Also after 20. ♙d2 bxc4 (weaker is 20...a5 21. ♙xb4 axb4 22. ♙d5) 21. ♜xb4 ♜c7!? (21...♜xb4 22. ♙xb4 ♜e8 23. 0-0) 22. ♙c3 ♙b7 23. ♜g5 ♜ae8 Black has nothing to fear.

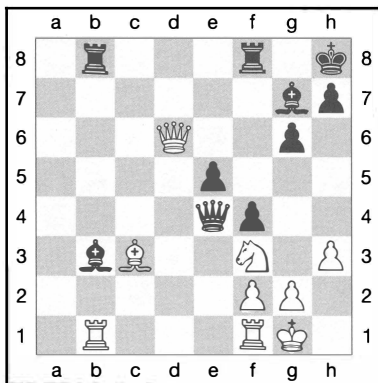
20...♜xa2 21. ♙d2 ♜b8 22. ♜a4 ♜b7 23. 0-0 ♜xb5 24. ♜xa2 ♜xb2 25. ♜xa7 ♜b7 26. ♜c5

The position has stabilised. The weakness of the e5-pawn is compensated by the weakness of the e4-pawn.

26...♙e6

26...♜xe4 is also possible, but Black has to withstand some initiative by White: 27. ♙c3 ♙b7 28. ♙xe5 ♙xe5 29. ♜fe1 ♜bc8 30. ♜a3 ♜a8 31. ♜b3 ♜a4. From the practical point of view, with time-trouble approaching, the move in the game is safer.

27. ♜d6 ♙b3 28. ♜b1 ♜xe4 29. ♙c3



29...♜bd8?!

It is from such trifles that the preconditions for an attack are created. If one looks at the difference in the defences of the kings, it is obvious that after exchanges on e5 the black king will be subject to a 'draught' along the adjacent a1-h8 and a2-g8 diagonals, which is dangerous with the



queens on the board. Meanwhile, after the simple 29...♖d5 the threat of ...e5–e4 would have forced White to exchange the queens – 30. ♙xe5 ♙xe5 31. ♖xe5+ ♖xe5 32. ♜xe5 ♙d5 with an imminent draw.

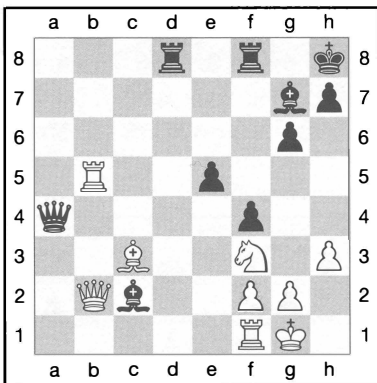
30. ♖a3 ♙c2?

Taking into account what was said earlier, the bishop should have been kept on the a2–g8 diagonal, for example 30...♙d5. Carlsen immediately exploits Black's mistake.

31. ♖b5! ♖a4?

Another inaccuracy. The queen coordinates better with the other pieces after 31...♖c6, and although White can still torment his opponent, there is no direct win: 32. ♖xe5!? (or 32. ♖b2 ♖c8 33. ♙xe5 ♙xe5 34. ♜xe5 ♖c3 35. ♖a2 ♖c7) 32...♖a8 33. ♖b2 ♙e4! (after 33...♖fc8 34. ♙d4 White is dominant on the long diagonal: 34...♖ab8 35. ♖e7! ♖xb2 36. ♖xg7 with the win of a pawn – 37. ♖xg6) 34. ♜d4 ♖b7 35. ♖b5 ♖f7 etc.

32. ♖b2



Over the last three moves the situation has changed sharply.

32...♙d3?

The bishop should have been urgently switched to the a2–g8 diagonal – 32...♙e4 33. ♙xe5 ♖a7 34. ♜g5 ♙d5 35. ♖d1 h6 36. ♖bxd5 ♖xd5 37. ♖xd5 hxg5. Black has a broken pawn structure, but the win is still a long way off. One gains the impression that Dominguez fails point-blank to see the vital diagonal.

33. ♖b7! ♖c2

There is no longer any way of saving the game. Things are hopeless after both 33...♙xf1 34. ♙xe5 ♖d7 35. ♙xg7+ and 33...♖d7 34. ♜xe5 ♙xe5 35. ♙xe5+ ♜g8 36. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 37. ♖b3+ ♖f7 38. ♖c1, when the threats of ♖c7 or ♙b2 and ♖c3, with an attack on the long diagonal, are irresistible.

34. ♖b4 ♖fe8 35. ♖e1

35. ♙xe5! ♙xe5 36. ♜xe5 ♖xe5 37. ♖xf4 was more energetic.

35...♙e2

35...♙a6 36. ♖a7 ♖a8 37. ♙xe5 would merely have delayed Black's inevitable defeat.

36. ♜xe5 ♙xe5 37. ♙xe5+ ♖xe5

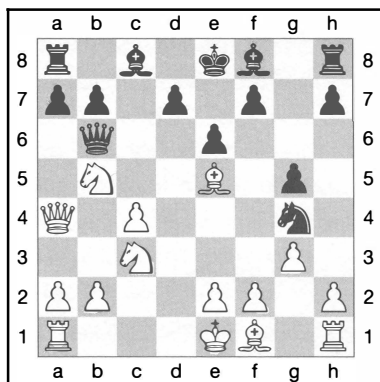
38. ♖xf4 ♖f5 39. ♖h6

Black resigned.

In Linares (FIDE category 21) Carlsen as though by inertia continued his 'Wijk' drawing series and began the tournament with five draws. But the essence is not in the number of draws – in such stellar company this is natural – but in the quality of the play. And here opening preparation comes to the fore. Given the modern state of theory, it is only

with the white pieces that it is realistic to hope to win against a player of equal class. But this demands painstaking work and searches in the labyrinths of theory, which is not to Magnus's taste. Typical, for example, is this admission in one of his interviews: 'I have never liked studying opening theory. For me a normal position is sufficient. If I have an advantage in an ending, I can play for a long time, trying to force the opponent to make a mistake.' But in super-tournaments it is naïve to rely on players making mistakes. And the deficiencies of Carlsen's opening preparation were seen already in the second round, when with White he was obliged to force a draw in his game with Dominguez after missing a trick.

1. c4 c5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. d4 cxd4
4. ♘xd4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 e6 6. g3 ♖b6
7. ♘db5 ♘e5 8. ♙f4 ♘fg4 9. ♖a4 (9. e3 is more often played) 9...g5! 10. ♙xe5.



- 10...♖xf2+! (in the game Aronian–Leko, Morelia/Linares 2008, 10...♘xe5 was played) 11. ♙d1 ♘xe5 12. ♘c7+ ♙d8 13. ♘xa8 ♖d4+ 14. ♙c2 ♘xc4, and Carlsen went in for a repetition of moves: 15. ♙b3 ♘d2+ 16. ♙c2 ♘c4 17. ♙b3 ♘d2+ 18. ♙c2 ½–½.

However, in the 6th round Magnus nevertheless managed to achieve what he wanted – he gained a minimal endgame advantage and in a drawn-out game he defeated Anand for the first time. But this proved to be a 'pyrrhic' victory. Magnus began the second half of the event with

two successive losses, to Aronian and Wang Yue, in which, playing White, he not only failed to extract anything from the opening, but even ended up in inferior positions. And only an important win in the 10th round over the leader Grischuk enabled him to finish the tournament worthily in 3rd place.

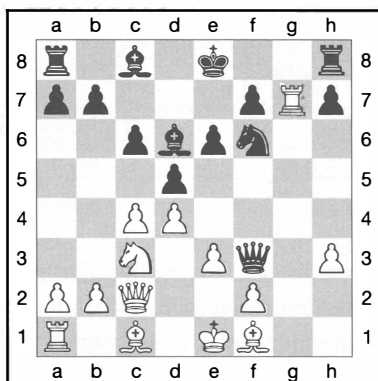
Game 47

M. Carlsen – V. Anand

Linares 2009

Semi-Slav Defence [D45]

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. ♘c3 ♘f6 4. e3 e6
5. ♘f3 ♘bd7 6. ♖c2 ♙d6 7. g4 ♘xg4
8. ♙g1 ♖f6 9. ♙xg4 ♖xf3 10. ♙xg7 ♘f6
11. h3





Beginning a chase of the queen – ♖g5 and ♔g2 is threatened. If White begins with 11. ♖g5, then 11...♗e4 12. ♗xe4 (12. ♔g2 ♜f6) 12...dxe4 13. ♔g2 ♜f6 14. ♖g4 e5 is possible, with roughly equal chances.

11...♜f5

It is hard to explain Anand's decision to go into an obviously inferior endgame (possibly the reasons were of a personal nature), where the presence of the pawn islands d5, f5, f7 and h7 condemns Black to a cheerless defence. Apparently he doubted whether it was possible to break open such a fortress. But it is well known that Carlsen is not afraid of hard work, and he is ready to play an endgame with a stable positional advantage.

The play was more lively in the game Aronian – Morozevich (Morelia/Linares 2007): 11...h6 (preventing ♖g5 with the threat of trapping the queen by ♔g2) 12. ♔d2 e5 13. ♖g3 ♜h5 14. cxd5 exd4 15. ♗e4 ♗xe4 16. ♜xe4+ ♜e5 17. ♜xe5+ ♔xe5 18. ♖f3 cxd5 19. ♔b5+ ♗e7 20. exd4 ♔d6 (20...♔xd4? 21. ♔b4+ ♗e6 22. 0-0-0 ♔e5 23. ♖e3 leads to the loss of the bishop) 21. ♗f1 ♔e6 with equal chances.

11...e5 is risky: 12. dxe5 ♔xe5 13. ♖g5 ♗d7 14. cxd5 cxd5 15. ♖f5 with advantage to White, Tisdall – Sidselrud (Norway 2002).

12. ♜xf5

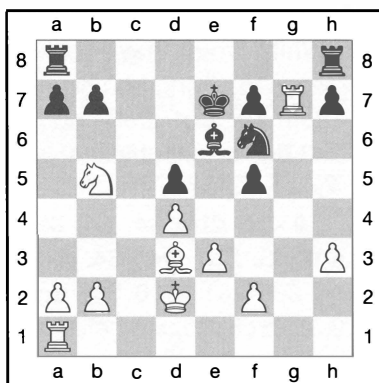
Of course, if 12. ♔d3 Black will happily capture the pawn – 12...♜xh3.

12...exf5 13. cxd5 cxd5

The exchange of knights came into consideration: 13...♗xd5 14. ♗xd5 cxd5 15. ♔d3 ♗e7 followed by ...♔e6 and ...♖ag8.

14. ♗b5 ♔b4+ 15. ♔d2 ♔xd2+

16. ♗xd2 ♗e7 17. ♔d3 ♔e6



18. ♗c7!?

An indication of a deep understanding of the endgame. Few would have conceived the idea of exchanging the knight for the 'bad' bishop. But Carlsen observed that the bishop was fulfilling the important task of defending the f5- and d5-pawns. For the solving of a strategic objective White uses a tactical feature of the position: the presence of the rook on g7 forces Black to capture the knight with his king, which will be tied to the defence of the f5- and d5-pawns.

18...♖ag8 19. ♗xe6 ♗xe6 20. ♖xg8 ♗xg8

Black does not want to concede the c-file after 20...♖xg8 21. ♖c1.

21. ♗e2

If 21. ♖c1 there follows 21...♗e7 22. ♖c7 ♖b8 and then ...♗d6.

21...♗e7 22. ♗f3 ♖c8 23. a4 ♖c7

24. a5 h6 25. h4 ♗f6 26. h5 ♗c8

27. ♗f4

While Black has been forced to adopt a waiting position, White has been seizing space.

27...♗d6 28. ♖g1 ♖c8 29. f3 ♗e6

It was hard to decide on the further weakening 29...a6, but this was possibly the

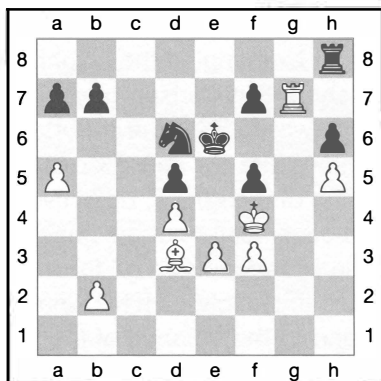


only way of not allowing the rook into the rear. White would have had to look for other ways to strengthen his position: 30. ♖e1 (both 30. ♙b1 ♜e6 and 30. ♖a1 ♖g8 31. ♖a3 ♖g5 are insufficient) 30... ♖g8 31. ♙c2 ♜c4 (weaker is 31... ♖g2 32. ♙b3 ♖xb2 33. ♙xd5 ♖b5 34. e4) 32. ♙xf5 (32. b4 ♖g5 33. ♖h1 ♜e6 34. ♙d3 ♜d6) 32... ♜xa5 33. ♖c1 ♜c6 34. ♖c3 ♜b4 (34... ♖g2 35. ♙c8) 35. ♙g4 etc.

30. ♖g7

With the threat of ♖h7.

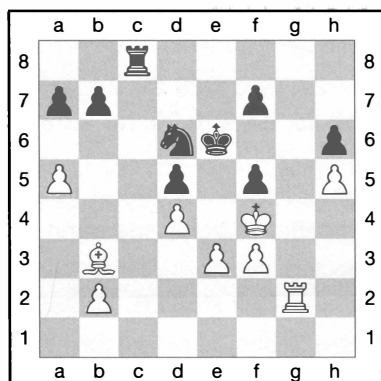
30... ♖h8



31. ♙c2!

A subtle manoeuvre of the bishop to b3, creating the threat of e3–e4.

31... ♖c8 32. ♙b3 ♖h8 33. ♖g1 ♖c8
34. ♖g7 ♖h8 35. ♖g2 ♖c8



36. ♖g1!

White gives his opponent the move (compare this position with the one after Black's 33rd move). Since Black cannot concede the c-file, he is forced to move his knight.

36... ♜e8

In the event of 36... ♜c4 Black has to reckon with the possibility of White transposing into a favourable rook endgame: 37. ♙xc4 ♖xc4 (or 37... dxc4 38. ♖g7 ♖h8 39. e4) 38. ♖g7 ♖a4 39. b4 ♖xb4 40. ♖h7 ♖a4 41. ♖xh6+ ♜e7 42. ♖h8 ♖xa5 43. ♖b8. He can also consider 37. e4!? fxe4 38. fxe4, putting the d5-pawn under pressure, since 38... dxe4? fails to 39. ♖c1, transposing into a won pawn endgame: 39... ♜d5 40. ♙xc4+ ♖xc4 41. ♖xc4 ♜xc4 42. ♜xe4. At the same time the manoeuvre ♙b3–d1–g4+ is threatened.

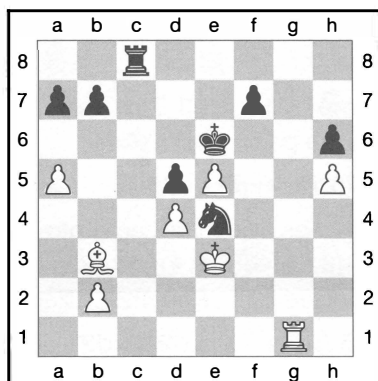
37. e4!

White changes the pawn structure, gaining access to the h-pawn.

37... fxe4 38. fxe4 ♜f6 39. e5 ♜e4

In the event of 39... ♜xh5+? 40. ♜e3 Black could have lost his knight.

40. ♜e3





40...b6

If 40...♘g5 Black has to reckon with the threat of sacrificing the exchange for two pawns: 41. ♖f1 ♙e4 42. ♖xf7!? ♜xf7 43. ♙xd5+ ♜e7 44. ♙xe4! (44. ♙xb7 ♖b8 45. ♙xe4 ♖xb2 is insufficient) 44...♖c1 (44...♖c4 45. d5 ♖a4 46. ♜f4) 45. d5 and the pawns, 'taken by the hand', advance towards the queening square: 45...♖f1 (or 45...b6 46. axb6 axb6 47. ♜f4 ♖f1+ 48. ♙f3 ♜d7 49. d6 ♜e6 50. b4! b5 51. ♜e4 and the king goes to c5) 46. d6+ ♜e6 47. ♙f3 ♖e1+ 48. ♜d4 ♖g1 49. ♙d5+ ♜d7 50. ♙xb7 etc.

41. axb6 axb6

Another positional achievement by White: his rook obtains new manoeuvring possibilities.

42. ♜d3 ♙f2+ 43. ♜e2 ♙e4 44. ♜e3

Again giving the opponent the move by the 'triangulation' method. Black has to decide whether to allow the rook into his rear or block the g-file.

44...f6

44...♙g5 was more resilient: 45. ♖a1 (here 45. ♖f1 ♙e4 46. ♖xf7 ♜xf7 47. ♙xd5+ ♜e7 48. ♙xe4 ♜e6 is now insufficient) 45...f6!? (weaker is 45...♙e4 46. ♖a6 ♖b8 47. ♙d1 with the threat of ♙g4+) 46. exf6 ♙e4 47. f7 ♖f8 48. ♖a6 ♖xf7 49. ♖xb6+ ♙d6, setting up a new defensive line.

45. ♖g6 ♖c1 46. ♖xh6 ♖h1 47. ♙c2 ♖h3+

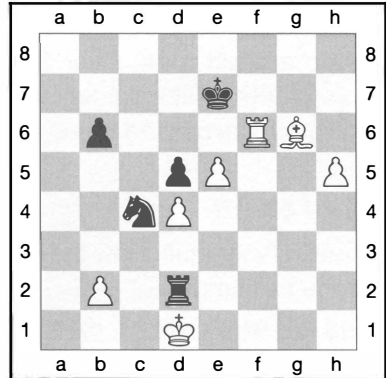
47...♖e1+! 48. ♜d3 ♖h1 was stronger.

48. ♜f4 ♖h4+ 49. ♜f3 ♙d2+ 50. ♜e2

50. ♜g3! ♖xd4 51. ♖xf6+ ♜xe5 52. ♖f5+

♜e6 53. h6 was stronger, when the h-pawn must decide the game.

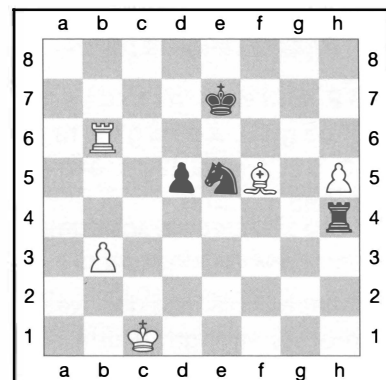
50...♖h2+ 51. ♜d1 ♙c4 52. ♖xf6+ ♜e7 53. ♙g6 ♖d2+



54. ♜c1

54. ♜e1 was more accurate: 54...♖xd4 55. h6 ♖h4 56. ♙f5 d4 57. ♖e6+ ♜f7 58. b3! ♙e3 59. ♖f6+ ♜e7 60. ♙c8! ♖h2 61. ♖d6 ♜e8 (in the event of 61...♜f8 62. h7 White exchanges the rooks and wins the d4-pawn) 62. ♙a6 ♙f5 63. ♙b5+ ♜e7 64. ♖xb6 ♙xh6. White wins by coordinating the actions of his pieces and the e-pawn: 65. ♙c4 ♙f5 66. ♖b7+ ♜e8 67. ♙b5+ ♜f8 68. e6 ♙e7 69. ♙c4.

54...♖xd4 55. b3 ♙xe5 56. ♖xb6 ♖h4 57. ♙f5



57...♖f3?

This was obviously not one of Anand's best days. By 57...♖h1+ he could have hindered the advance of the h-pawn. 58. ♜b2 ♕c4+! 59. bxc4 ♖xh5 60. ♙g6 ♖h2+ 61. ♜c3 dxc4 leads to the theoretically drawn ending rook and bishop against rook. After 58. ♜c2 ♕f3 59. ♙g4 ♕g5 Black somehow holds on, and without the passed b-pawn White cannot get by.

58. h6 ♕d4 59. h7!

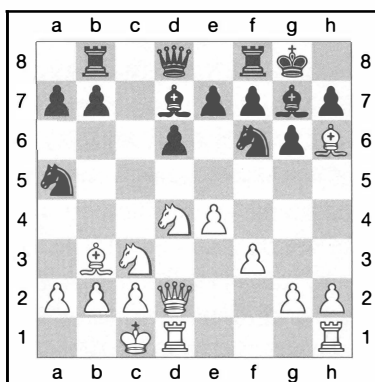
A well-known technique. Now the h-pawn will cost the exchange.

59...♜xf5 60. ♖b8 ♕d4 61. ♜b2 ♜d6 62. h8♙ ♖xh8 63. ♖xh8

The game enters the technical conversion phase.

63...♜c5 64. ♖h5 ♕c6 65. ♖h4 ♕b4 66. ♜a3 d4 67. ♖h5+ ♕d5 68. ♜b2 ♜c6 69. ♜a3 ♜c5 70. ♖h4 ♕b4 71. ♖h8 ♕c6 72. ♖h5+ ♜d6 73. b4 d3 74. ♖h3 ♕e5 75. ♜b3 d2 76. ♜c2 ♕c6 77. ♖h4 ♜d5

Black resigned.



away the knight by ...e7–e5. In this case the d6-pawn is not so vulnerable, since after ...b7–b5 Black has the multi-purpose manoeuvre ...♖b6, when the rook defends the pawn while also taking part in an attack on the king (...♙a6, ...♙a5). True, all the same the shadow of ♕d4–f5 hangs over the king's position.

12...♙xh6

It is useful to divert the queen from the centre – in the event of the wing attack h2–h4–h5 there is the reply ...g6–g5.

13. ♙xh6 b5 14. g4

It is an eternal dilemma in the Dragon – with which pawn to begin the assault? White begins with the g-pawn, not allowing 14...e5 in view of 15. ♕f5!, but now Black succeeds in initiating counterplay.

The alternative is 14. h4 e5!? 15. ♕de2 b4 16. ♕d5 ♕xb3+ 17. axb3 (there is no particular point in 17. cxb3 ♕xd5 18. ♖xd5 ♙e6 19. ♖d2 ♖b6, when apart from the attack with ...♙a6 and ...♙a5 Black has the distant prospect of a favourable end-game, L'Ami–Tiviakov (Leeuwarden 2004) 17...♕xd5 18. ♖xd5 ♙e6 (18...♖b6 is also good, with the idea of 19. h5 g5!) 19. ♖d3 (19. h5 is not dangerous in view of 19...♙c7!

Game 48

L. Dominguez – M. Carlsen

Linares 2009

Sicilian Defence [B78]

1. e4 c5 2. ♕f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♕xd4 ♕f6 5. ♕c3 g6 6. ♙e3 ♙g7 7. f3 ♕c6 8. ♙d2 0–0 9. ♙c4 ♙d7 10. 0–0–0 ♖b8 11. ♙b3 ♕a5 12. ♙h6

(see next diagram)

The exchange of bishops deprives ...♕c4 of much of its strength. But it also has drawbacks: in certain lines Black can drive

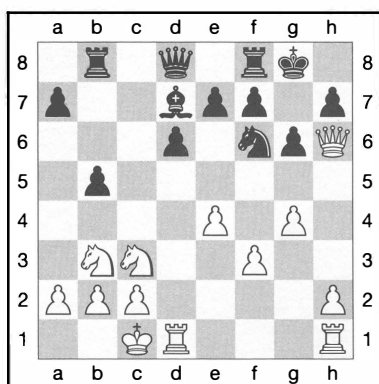


20. h×g6 f×g6 21. ♖×d6 ♜fc8 22. c4 b×c3 23. ♜×c3 ♜b6 with a good game for Black, Lastin–B. Savchenko, Sochi 2007) 19...♜b6 20. f4 ♕g4 21. h5 ♜c7 22. ♜g3 ♜c8 with chances for both sides, Bologan–B. Savchenko (Sochi 2007).

14...♜×b3+

It is pointless playing 14...♜c4 15. h4 e5? 16. ♜d×b5.

15. ♜×b3



With this move White effectively abandons the potential threat of ♜d4–f5, for the sake of which g2–g4 was played. 15. a×b3!? b4 16. ♜ce2 came into consideration, and now if 16...e5?! there is the good reply 17. ♜f5! g×f5 18. g×f5 ♜h8 19. ♜hg1 ♜g8 20. ♜xg8+ ♜xg8 21. ♜×d6 and then 22. ♜×e5, obtaining three pawns for the knight. Apparently the best for Black is 16...♜b6, defending the pawn beforehand in the event of 17. h4 e5 18. ♜f5 g×f5 19. g×f5 ♜h8 20. ♜hg1 ♜g8.

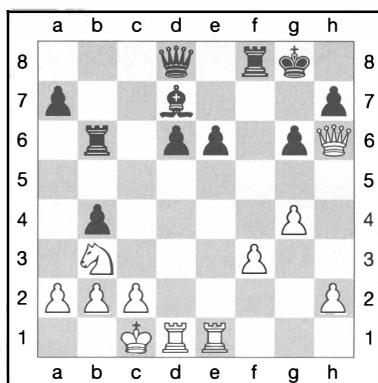
15...b4 16. ♜d5 ♜×d5 17. exd5 ♜b6!

The best square for the ‘Chinese’ rook. From here it is ready for an attack on the king, and in the given specific case it also supports the ...e7–e5 advance.

18. ♜he1

Abandoning the flank strategy – 18. h4 e5 19. dxe6 fxe6 20. h5 g5.

18...e5 19. dxe6 fxe6



Objectively speaking, Black’s position is already the more promising. White’s f3-pawn is weak, and at the same time the d6/e6 ‘small centre’ is ready to take up more active positions. In addition, an attack on the king looks more real for Black than for White.

20. ♜e3 ♜f7

Alexey Kuzmin recommends 20...e5!? 21. h4 ♜c7 22. h5 ♕e8 with good play for Black.

21. ♜d2 d5 22. ♜b3

The e6/d5 pawn pair – which is usually a headache for Black in the classical variation of the French Defence – does not constitute a problem here, since it cannot be blockaded by the knight. On the contrary, in a number of variations it can become mobile. For example, White cannot fix this pair with 22. f4. By playing 22...♜f6 23. ♜f3 ♕b5 (with the threat of ...♕e2) 24. ♜f2 e5 Black breaks through in the centre.



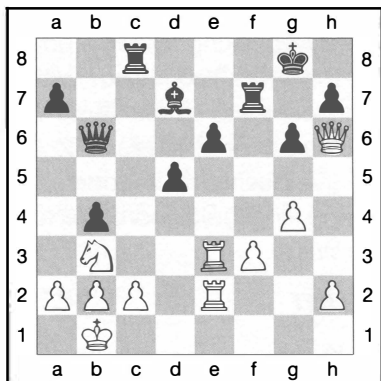
22...♙c7 23. ♜b1 ♞b8 24. ♞de1

It is obvious that White's play on the king-side has come to a standstill, whereas Black's threats on the opposite wing are real. Therefore it was logical to bring back the queen to support the other pieces: 24. ♙h4 ♞c8 25. ♙f2, going onto the defensive.

24...♞c8

While White has been seeking the required regrouping, Black has taken firm possession of the c-file and is ready for action.

25. ♞1e2 ♙b6



26. h4

A pointless move. The advance of the d-pawn should have been prevented, but this is not easily done. For example, after 26. ♞d2 ♞c4 27. ♞ed3 ♞cf4 Black switches to a siege of the f3-pawn – 28. ♟d4 ♙c7 and prepares ...e6–e5 (the direct 28...e5 29. ♟e2 leads to simplification of the position), retaining a serious initiative.

Possibly the best for White was 26. ♟c1, setting up a distant defensive line: 26...♞cf8 (26...d4) 27. h4.

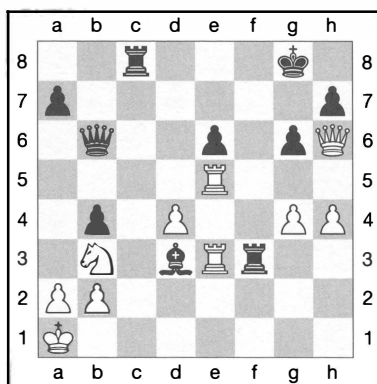
26...d4!

Black clears the approaches to the king.

27. ♞e5 d3 28. cxd3 ♞xf3 29. d4?

Carlsen's energy has had its effect. Dominguez, as though hypnotised, watches the opponent's actions. The queen should have been urgently brought back to the defence – 29. ♙d2.

29...♞b5 30. ♞2e3 ♞d3+ 31. ♟a1



31...♙xd4!?

The consequence of the back rank being undefended. It is hard to resist such a move, but the ruthless *Rybka* points out that 31...♞f2!, with the same threat, is more effective. 32. ♞e1 allows a mating attack: 32...♞xb2! 33. ♟xb2 ♞c2+ 34. ♟a1 ♙c6! 35. ♞c5 ♞xa2 36. ♟xa2 ♙a4+ 37. ♟b2 ♙a3#.

32. ♞xe6 ♞f1+ 33. ♞e1 ♙xg4

With the threat of 34...♙d1+.

34. ♞xf1 ♙xe6 35. ♟c5 ♙e2 36. ♞c1 ♞f5

White has somehow plugged the holes in his position. But Black has an extra pawn



and prospects of a pawn storm against the king's residence.

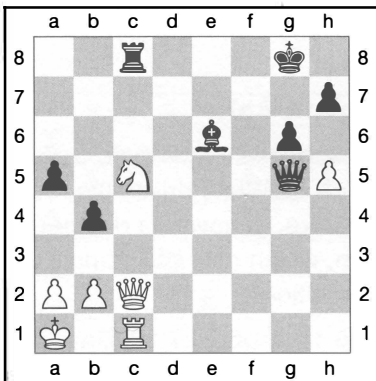
37. ♖f4 a5 38. h5

With the faint hope of 38...♙xh5? 39. ♖c4+ ♕f8 40. ♖d4.

38...♙e7 39. ♖c4+?

In time-trouble Dominguez fails to exploit his last chance. The preparatory opening of the h-file by the exchange 39. h×g6 h×g6 would not have done White any harm. After 40. ♖c4+ the reply 40...♙e6 is now insufficient in view of 41. ♖d4 with the threat of ♖h1. Black would have had to restrict himself to 40...♖g7 41. ♖d4+ ♖f6, reducing the tempo of the attack. However, this would not have saved the game for White.

39...♙e6 40. ♖c2 ♖g5!



Now White is tied, as they say, hand and foot. Dominguez could have calmly resigned, but he was as though in a lethargic sleep. The rest is all Black.

41. h×g6 h×g6 42. a3 b×a3 43. ♖c3

A piece is lost after 43. b×a3 ♖e5+ 44. ♖b2 ♖×c5.

43...a×b2+ 44. ♕×b2 ♖d5 45. ♖c2 a4 46. ♕a1 a3 47. ♖e3 ♙f7 48. ♖c3 g5

49. ♖e3 ♖e8 50. ♖c3 ♖e2

50...♖d4! was more forceful.

51. ♖b3 ♖×c2 52. ♖×c2 ♖e5+

The trap 52...♖×b3?? 53. ♖g6+ is only for beginners.

53. ♕b1 ♕g7 54. ♖d2 ♙×b3

White resigned.

Game 49

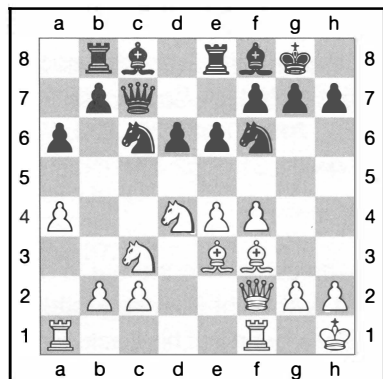
M. Carlsen – A. Grischuk

Linares 2009

Sicilian Defence [B85]

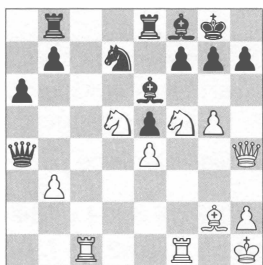
1. e4 c5 2. ♖f3 d6 3. d4 c×d4 4. ♖×d4 ♖f6 5. ♖c3 a6 6. ♙e2 e6 7. 0–0 ♙e7 8. a4 ♖c6 9. ♙e3 0–0 10. f4 ♖c7 11. ♕h1 ♖e8 12. ♙f3 ♙f8 13. ♖d2 ♖b8 14. ♖f2

This variation was well known to Grischuk from his Candidates match with Rublevsky (Elista 2007), where he upheld the white side. In the 8th game of the match Grischuk played 14. ♖ad1 and after 14...e5 15. ♖de2 b5 16. a×b5 a×b5 17. f5 b4 18. ♖d5 ♖×d5 19. ♖×d5 ♙a6 20. ♖d2 ♖d4 21. ♙×d4 e×d4 22. ♖fe1 ♙×e2 23. ♖×e2 ♙e7 24. ♖×d4 ♙f6 25. ♖c4 ♖a5 White had the better chances.



14...e5

After 14...♙d7 15. g4! e5 White gains an important tempo for the attack on the king-side. The game Carlsen – Anand (Wijk aan Zee 2008) continued 16. ♖f5 exf4 17. ♙xf4! ♙e6 18. ♖ad1 ♖e5 19. ♙xe5 dxe5 20. g5 ♖d7 21. ♖d5 ♙c6 22. ♙g2 ♙c5, and here Magnus launched an attack on the king: 23. ♙h4 ♙xc2 24. ♖c1 ♙xa4 25. b3!?



Analytical diagram

25...♙a5? 26. ♖c3 g6 27. ♖h3 h5, and here instead of 28. ♙f3 ♙xd5! 29. exd5 ♙g7, after which Black was able to defend, according to analysis by Maxim Notkin White could have concluded the game in spectacular fashion: 28. ♖g3!! (with the threat of ♖xh5) 28...♙g4 29. ♖xh5! gxh5 (or 29...♙xh5 30. ♙f2 f5 31. gxh5 ♖e6 32. ♖xh5 gxh5 33. ♙h3) 30. ♙f2! f5 (30...♙e6 31. ♖xh5+) 31. gxh5 and wins.

It remains to add that, in the diagram position, instead of 25...♙a5? Black could have seized the initiative with a queen sacrifice: 25...♙xb3! 26. ♖c3 ♙xd5! 27. ♖xb3 ♙xb3 28. ♖f3 ♖bc8! 29. ♖xb3?! ♖c1+ 30. ♙f1 ♖xf1+ 31. ♙g2 ♖f4! (Notkin).

15. fxe5

Carlsen, as usual, is concrete in his decisions: 'At first sight it looks a bit illogical, letting Black get rid of his backward pawn on d6 and opening up for his bishop on

f8, and leaving White with a bad bishop on f3. However, the move has some points as well: the bad bishop might turn out to actually be very strong after a subsequent ♖d5 ♖xd5 exd5, and the possibility of creating a passed pawn and a dangerous queenside majority is generally dangerous for Black.'

15...dxe5

The capture with the knight 15...♖xe5 leads to loss of material after 16. ♙g5! ♙e7 17. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 18. ♖d5 ♙d8 19. ♙h5.

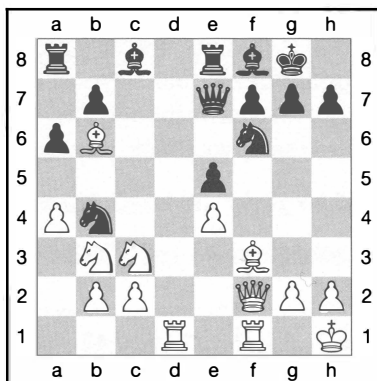
16. ♖b3

This is where a subtle point of the pawn exchange on move 15 is seen. If instead of 15. fxe5 White had retreated 15. ♖b3, then after 15...b5 16. axb5 axb5 17. ♖d5 ♖xd5 18. exd5 exf4 Black would have obtained the e5-square. But now 16...b5 would be a blank shot – 17. axb5 axb5 18. ♖d5 ♖xd5 19. exd5, and the knight is driven to a less good post.

16...♖b4 17. ♙a7

A well-known technique: before placing his bishop on b6 White drives the rook to its initial square, removing a defender of the b7-pawn, which may be of importance in some variations.

17...♖a8 18. ♙b6 ♙e7 19. ♖ad1





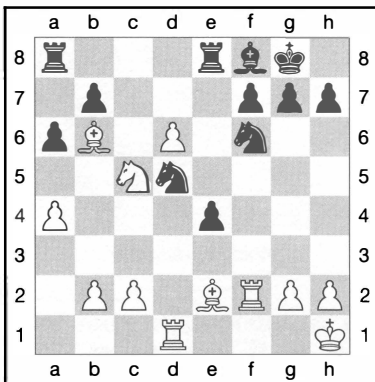
19... ♖e6?!

A routine move, which leads to White creating a dangerous passed pawn. 'Safer was 19... ♖g4!, which looks paradoxical, as Black offers to exchange his "good" bishop for my "bad" bishop, but actually it makes a lot of sense, as the key move now will be less dangerous. White still keeps a slight initiative, but Black has a perfectly decent position.' (Carlsen)

20. ♖d5 ♗x♖d5 21. ♖x♖d5 ♖e4 22. ♖d6 ♗e6?

It is well known that the queen is a poor blockader, and 22... ♗d7 23. ♖c5 ♗f5 would have led to a position from the game, but why present the opponent with a tempo? 22... ♗e5 23. ♖d7 ♖x♖d7 24. ♖x♖d7 ♖x♖f3 25. ♗x♖f3 ♖f6 26. ♖d4 ♗e4 was the best way out of the situation.

23. ♖c5 ♗f5 24. ♖e2 ♗x♖f2 25. ♖x♖f2 ♖bd5



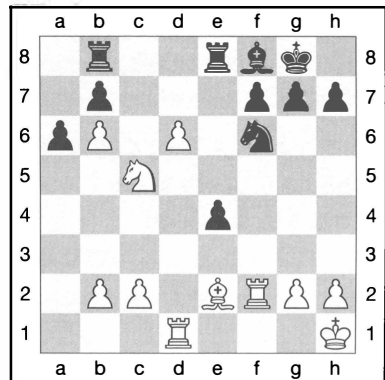
26. a5?

Throwing away the fruits of his previous work, whereas after 26. ♖x♖f6 ♖x♖f6 the move 27. a5 would have practically placed Black in zugzwang. It is hard for him to find a move, whereas White can calmly improve

the placing of his pieces and prepare a breakthrough on the queenside.

26... ♖xb6 27. ♖xb6 ♗ab8?

Grischuk returns the favour. He should not have clung on to the pawn – the position could have been held by the activation of the rook: 27... ♖ec8 28. ♖b4 ♖c6 29. ♖d7 ♖xc5 30. ♖xc5 (30. ♖d8 ♗+ is also insufficient: 30... ♖xd8 31. ♖xd8+ ♖f8 32. ♖xa6 ♖xb6) 30... ♖d8 31. ♖xa6 ♖xc5 (31... ♖xa6 32. ♖b7 leads to the loss of the exchange) 32. ♖xb7 ♖b5, picking up the pawns.



28. ♖x♖f6!

Clearing the barrier in front of the passed pawn. Carlsen confidently converts his advantage.

28... ♖x♖f6 29. ♖d7 ♖f5 30. ♖c4 ♖a5 31. ♖c5 ♖g7 32. ♖xb8 ♖xb8 33. ♖a6! ♖f6 34. ♖xb7 ♖xb7 35. ♖c6 ♖xb6 36. ♖c1!

The final subtlety – after 36. ♖c7? ♖c6 White would have lost.

36... ♖xb2 37. ♖d7

Black resigned.



Carlsen's first appearance at the Mtel Masters super-tournament in Sofia (FIDE category 21) was reassuring. In the very first round he defeated the main tournament favourite Topalov. In the second half Magnus gained additional wins over Dominguez and Wang Yue and was wearing the yellow jersey going into the last round, half a point ahead of Shirov and Topalov. The fate of the first prize was decided in the Shirov–Carlsen game. It was sufficient for the Norwegian to make a draw, and it appeared that the game was following a perfected scenario: he played his favourite Chelyabinsk Variation, where he had the reputation of being invincible. But it was here that a serious hole in Magnus's opening preparation was revealed – he fell into a prepared line by Shirov and lost. As a result, the first prize was won by Shirov, and Carlsen had to be satisfied with a share of 2nd–3rd places with Topalov.

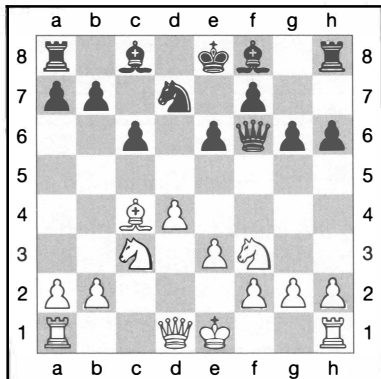
Game 50

M. Carlsen – V. Topalov

Sofia 2009

Semi-Slav Defence [D43]

**1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. ♖f3 ♖f6 4. ♘c3
e6 5. ♗g5 h6 6. ♙xf6 ♗xf6 7. e3 ♘d7
8. ♙d3 dxc4 9. ♙xc4 g6**

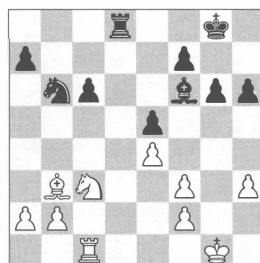


The old variation 9...♙d6 10. 0–0 ♗e7 11. ♘e4 ♙c7 12. ♖c1, where Black has a cramped position, has hardly been played in recent times.

10. 0–0 ♗g7 11. e4 0–0

Castling usually leads to more complicated play, which is in accordance with Topalov's style. Another critical branch, 11...e5, pre-

venting the squeezing of Black's position, occurred in the rapid game Carlsen–Karlakin (Nice 2009), which continued 12. d5 ♘b6 13. ♙b3 ♗g4 14. ♖c1! (in the event of 14. h3 ♙xf3 15. ♗xf3 ♗xf3 16. gxf3 ♗e7 Black centralises his king) 14...0–0 15. h3 ♙xf3 16. ♗xf3 ♗xf3 17. gxf3 ♖fd8 18. ♖fd1 ♙f6 19. dxc6 bxc6 20. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8.



Analysis diagram

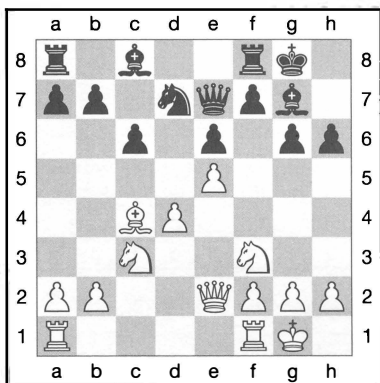
It used to be thought that the end-game arising in this variation was not dangerous for Black. However, it is by no means easy to make a draw. White has a small advantage, not only thanks to his superior pawn structure (weak pawns on a7 and c6), but also the favourable opposite-colour bishops: the light-square bishop ties the black king to the defence of the f7-pawn, whereas the dark-square bishop is passive.



Carlsen happily plays this type of ending: 21. ♖d1 ♜d6 22. ♜c5 ♜f8 23. ♜f1 h5 24. ♜e3 ♜e7?! (the bishop should have been freed from having to defend the e5-pawn – 24...♜h4! 25. ♜e2 f6) 25. ♜e2 ♜g7 26. ♜c2, and Black was unable to defend his weak pawns.

12. e5 ♜e7 13. ♜e2

A typical structure in the Moscow Variation. Black's counterplay involves developing his bishop at b7 and preparing ...c6–c5. White prepares the manoeuvre of his bishop to e4, in order to meet ...c6–c5 with the exchange of the light-square bishops and the possible central breakthrough d4–d5.



13...b5

13...b6 is more often preferred: 14. ♜fe1 ♜d8 (after 14...♜b7 15. ♜a6 White advantageously exchanges the light-square bishops) 15. ♜ad1. Now Black has to decide whether to forestall the exchange of bishops by 15...a5 or continue manoeuvring – 15...♜b8.

a) 15...a5 (in combination with ...c6–c5 this move somehow does not look right, since it leads to a weakening of the queenside) 16. ♜d3 ♜b7 17. ♜e4 b5

18. h4 ♜b6 19. ♜b1 c5 20. ♜xb5 ♜a6, and here instead of 21. h5 g5 with double-edged play (Kramnik–Svidler, World Championship, Mexico 2007), 21. ♜d3! would have retained the better chances.

b) 15...♜b8 16. ♜d3 ♜b7 17. ♜e4 c5 18. ♜xb7 ♜xb7 19. ♜e4 ♜bb8 20. ♜b5 (20. d5 exd5 21. ♜xd5 is also possible) 20...cxd4 (20...a6 21. ♜a7) 21. ♜bxd4, and the weakness of Black's light-square periphery guarantees White an enduring advantage.

14. ♜d3 ♜b7

In the game Graf–Kraemer (Bundesliga 2007) Black prematurely forced the ...c6–c5 advance: 14...b4?! 15. ♜a4 c5 16. ♜ac1 cxd4 17. ♜e4 ♜b8 18. ♜c7 and White gained the advantage.

15. ♜e4 ♜fd8

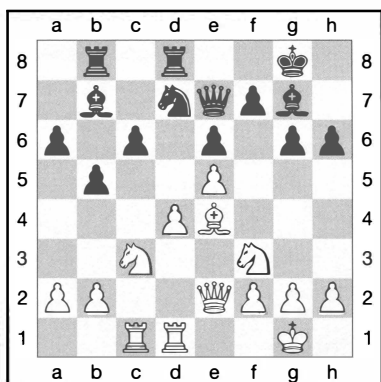
Black carries out the standard rook deployment in this variation, preparing the freeing ...c6–c5. The immediate 15...♜ab8 is also possible, although here too after 16. ♜ac1 a6 17. ♜fd1 it is not easy to make this advance, since 17...c5? is parried by 18. ♜xb7 ♜xb7 19. ♜e4 with the occupation of d6. Its preparation requires time. For example: 17...♜fc8 18. h4 h5 19. ♜g5! ♜a8 20. ♜e3 c5 21. f4 cxd4 22. ♜xd4 with advantage to White in view of the chronic weakness of the d6-point.

16. ♜ac1

If 16. ♜xb5 there would have followed 16...♜xe5.

16...♜ab8 17. ♜fd1 a6

(see next diagram)

**18. h4**

The manoeuvre 18. ♖b1! was more in the spirit of the position, exploiting the respite (18...c5? is not possible on account of 19. ♙xb7 ♜xb7 20. dxc5) to play the knight to b3. A possible continuation is 18...♜dc8 19. ♜bd2 ♙a8 (now if 19...c5? there follows 20. ♙xb7 ♜xb7 21. ♜e4 with an invasion at d6) '20. ♜e3! (a great preparatory move, shown by the engines. 20. ♜b3 c5 21. ♙xa8 ♜xa8 with equality is what discouraged me from playing 18. ♜b1) 20...c5 21. ♙xa8 ♜xa8 22. ♜e4, and since 22...cxd4 can now be met by 23. ♜xd4, White has a clear initiative.' (Carlsen)

18...♙a8

Here 18...c5 is now possible, since 19. ♙xb7 ♜xb7 20. ♜e4 is less effective because of 20...cxd4 21. ♜xd4 (21. ♜d6 ♜bb8 22. ♜xd4 ♜xe5) 21...♜xe5 22. ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 23. ♜xe5 ♙xe5 24. ♜c5 ♜c7 25. ♜d3 ♙h2+ 26. ♙h1 ♜b8.

19. ♜c2

19. h5 g5 20. ♜h2 was more energetic, switching the knight to g4.

19...♜dc8 20. ♜dc1 ♜f8

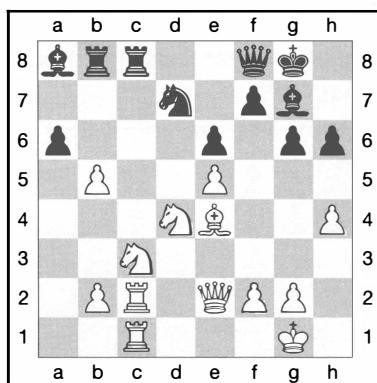
Since 20...c5?! 21. ♙xa8 ♜xa8 22. ♜e4 leads to a pin on the c-file, Black defends his rook on c8.

21. a4?!

21. ♜e3 c5 22. ♙xa8 ♜xa8 23. d5 came into consideration.

21...c5?!

'After the simple 21...b4 22. ♜b1 c5 23. ♙xa8 ♜xa8 24. dxc5 ♜xc5 (24...♜xc5 25. ♜c4!) 25. ♜bd2 ♜xc2 26. ♜xc2 ♜c8 Black even has a slight initiative, thanks to the weaknesses on e5 and a4. It's hard to explain why both players had missed this.' (Carlsen)

22. axb5 cxd4 23. ♜xd4**23...♙xe4?**

A strategic mistake, allowing complete domination by the knights in the centre of the board. After 23...axb5 24. ♙xa8 ♜xa8 the weakness of the b5-pawn is balanced by the weakness of the e5-pawn, which gives Black adequate counterplay. If 25. f4 there is the good reply 25...♜d8 (with the threat of ...♜xe5) 26. ♜f2 and Black has a choice between 26...g5 and 26...b4.

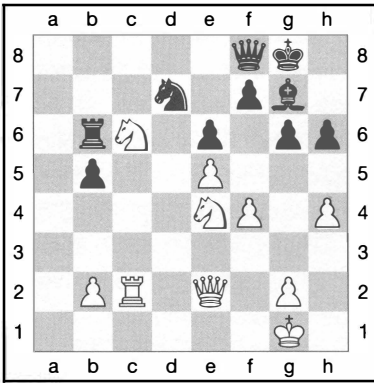
24. ♜xe4 ♜xc2 25. ♜xc2 axb5

25...♙xe5 is dangerous because of 26. ♜d2!, when the black pieces are hanging (♜c6 is threatened).

26. ♜c6! ♜b6 27. f4



Playing for a complete bind; it only remains to 'seal' Black up with ♖d6.



27...♙a8

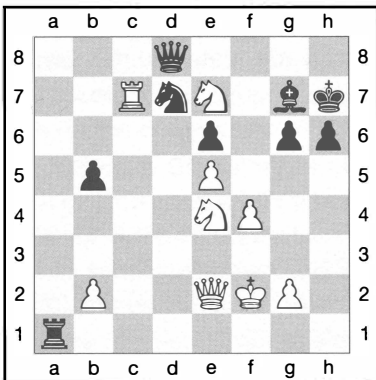
The queen is more active after 27...♖b8 28. ♖a7! ♙b4, but it cannot do anything on its own: 29. h5 ♙b7 30. ♖c8 ♙d7 31. ♖cd6 etc.

28. ♖e7+ ♖h7 29. h5 ♙a6 30. h×g6+ f×g6 31. ♙c7! ♙a1+ 32. ♖f2?

'I thought that the most natural 32. ♖h2 would give Black unnecessary counterplay after 32...♖xe5, but this fails to the simple 33. ♖f6+ ♖×f6 34. ♖d5+ ♖g7 35. ♙×e5 ♙f8 36. ♙×g7+ ♙×g7 37. ♖f6+, when Black is mated or loses the queen.' (Carlsen)

32...♙d8

32...♙a4 33. ♖c6! ♖f8 34. ♖f6+ also does not help.



33. ♙d3! ♙×e7

33...♙×c7 allows a mating attack: 34. ♖g5+! h×g5 35. ♙×g6+ ♖h8 36. ♙h5+ ♖h6 37. ♙×h6#.

34. ♙×d7 ♙h4+ 35. ♖f3 ♙h5+

If 35...♖h8, then 36. ♙×g7 ♖×g7 37. ♖f6 is decisive.

36. ♖g3

Black resigned.

Game 51

M. Carlsen – Wang Yue

Sofia 2009

Slav Defence [D15]

There are few players who do not have awkward opponents. Carlsen is no exception. He was one of the Lviv player Andrey Volokitin's 'clients' (0–5!). But that was a long time ago (by Magnus's standards) – in 2006, and with the existing rating table their paths are not likely to cross in the near future. But another 'offender', Wang Yue, is among his present-day rivals. The Chinese grandmaster is one of Carlsen's most awkward opponents: in their six games before the present one with the classical time control he not only did not suffer a single loss, but he also twice forced the Norwegian to lay down his arms. Moreover, this was in the main tournaments of 2009, in Wijk aan Zee and Linares, where Carlsen was a real contender for first prize.

1. c4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. ♖f3 ♖f6 4. ♖c3 a6

The Chebanenko Variation, named after the well-known Moldovan trainer, who made a detailed analysis of this system of defence. Wang Yue is one of the most fervent supporters of this variation.

**5. c5**

The most critical reply: White tries to gain space on the queenside. In a previous game with Wang Yue (Linares 2009), the ...a7–a6 theme was performed in a different scenario: 1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. ♖c3 ♗f6 4. e3 a6 and after 5. ♗f3 b5 the play took on a quite different aspect.

5...♗f5

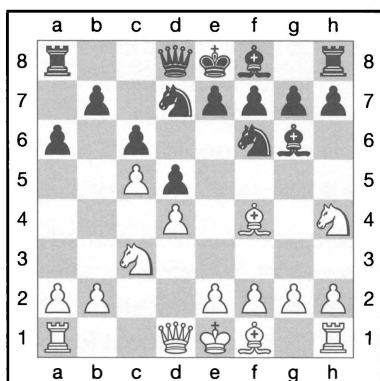
Wang Yue's favourite reply in this variation. The main continuation is considered to be 5...♖bd7, with which Black prepares the undermining of the pawn chain by ...e6–e5 and ...b7–b6.

6. ♗h4

Magnus takes the decision to exchange the bishop, giving the position clear strategic contours. In the main line – 6. ♗f4 ♖bd7 7. e3 e6 8. ♗e2 there is the possible 8...♗e4, when Black's light-square bishop plays an important role.

6...♗g6

In the event of 6...♗g4 7. h3 ♗h5 8. g4 ♗g6 all the same the bishop has to retreat to g6. The inclusion of h2–h3 and g2–g4 not only expands White's space on the kingside, but also gives him a tempo for developing his bishop with 9. ♗g2, from where it supports the e2–e4 advance.

7. ♗f4 ♖bd7**8. ♗xg6!?**

The concrete nature of Carlsen's thinking is one of the important components of his playing style. White nips in the bud the possibility of ...e6–e5.

At the Amber Tournament (Nice 2009) in his rapid game with Wang Yue, Anand made this exchange after 8. e3 e6 9. h3 ♗e7 10. ♗xg6 h×g6 11. ♗d3, and also resolved his main strategic objectives: along with ...♗e4 he also excluded ...e6–e5. The game continued 11...♖c8 12. 0–0 0–0 13. b4 ♗e8 14. ♗h2! ♗d8 15. f4! b6 16. a3 a5 17. ♖c2 ♖b7 18. g4 ♗c7 19. ♗g2 a×b4 20. a×b4 ♗×a1 21. ♗×a1 ♗a8 22. ♗×a8+ ♖×a8 23. ♖a4 ♖×a4 24. ♗×a4, and White achieved the better endgame. Apart from Black's compromised pawn structure on the kingside, his c6-pawn is also weak, and if 24...b5 he has to reckon with the sacrifice of a piece for a pair of connected passed pawns.

However, after 8. e3 Black could also play 8...e5. Now nothing is promised by 9. ♗×e5 ♗×e5 10. d×e5 ♗d7, while in the event of 9. d×e5 ♗h5 the move ♗g5 is no longer possible.

8...h×g6 9. h3!

Immediately preparing the retreat of the bishop. If 9. e3 there would have followed 9...e5!.

9...b6

Here if 9...e5 there is 10. d×e5 ♗h5 11. ♗h2 ♗×c5, and if White does not like the complications after 12. g4 ♖b6 13. e3 ♖×b2 14. ♗c1 d4, he can restrict himself to 12. ♖d2 ♖e7 13. g4. Now after 13...d4 it is possible to transpose into a favourable endgame: 14. ♗e4 ♗b4 15. ♗d6+ ♖×d6

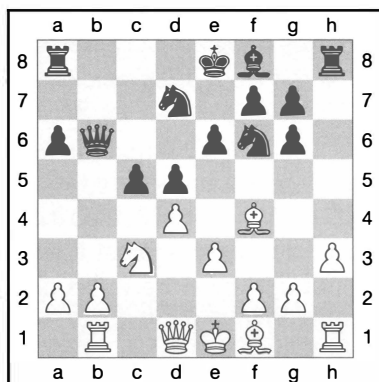


16. exd6 ♙xd2+ 17. ♜xd2 ♜hf6 18. ♜d1. Instead of 10...♜h5, 10...♞c7 11. e3 ♜xe5 12. b4 ♙e7 13. ♙e2 0–0 14. 0–0 a5 15. a3 ♜fd7 looks more solid, with an acceptable game. For example, if 16. e4, then 16...axb4 17. axb4 ♜xa1 18. ♞xa1 d4! 19. ♜a4 ♜f3+ 20. ♙xf3 ♞xf4 21. ♞xd4 ♜e5 22. ♙d1 ♜d8 23. ♞c3 ♙f6 is possible, with excellent compensation for the pawn. 16. ♞d2!? is more circumspect.

10. cxb6

If 10. b4?! there follows 10...bxc5 11. bxc5 e5!.

10...♞xb6 11. ♜b1 e6 12. e3 c5



Although the opening battle has concluded safely for Black, certain problems still remain. White has the advantage of the two bishops, and the exchange of the dark-square pair will enhance the role of the light-square bishop in supporting a pawn offensive on the queenside.

13. a3

White's plan is to advance his pawns and create a passed pawn. If 13...♙e7, for example, there follows 14. dxc5 ♜xc5 15. b4 ♜ce4 16. ♜a4 ♞d8 17. ♙d3, and the queenside pawns, supported by the

bishops, are ready to advance.

13...♙d6

After the other version of the bishop exchange – 13...cxd4 14. exd4 ♙d6 – White gains a serious positional plus: a pawn majority on the queenside. This could have been avoided by the radical 13...c4, but then Black still has the problem of defending his queenside in the event of b2–b3. For example: 14. ♙e2 (after the immediate 14. b3 there is the good reply 14...♞a5!) 14...♙d6 15. ♙xd6 ♞xd6 16. 0–0 0–0 17. ♞a4 ♜fb8 18. b3 ♜b6 19. ♞a5 cxb3 20. ♜xb3.

14. ♜a4 ♞c7

The provocative 14...♞a5+? 15. b4 cxb4 16. ♙xd6 b3+ 17. ♙b4 ♞xa4 18. ♞xb3 ♞xb3 19. ♜xb3 leads to the two bishops being a real advantage.

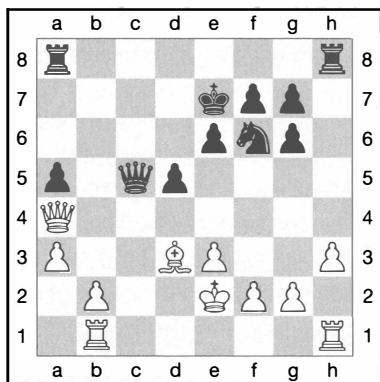
15. ♙xd6 ♞xd6 16. ♜xc5 ♜xc5

17. dxc5 ♞xc5 18. ♞a4+ ♜e7 19. ♙d3 a5

The position has clarified. To play for a win White must not only create a passed pawn, but also keep the queens on, as otherwise this pawn will be easily blockaded.

20. ♜e2!

A highly concrete move, which as regards the opponent's reply also has a psychological implication: White displays his readiness to give up his two rooks for the queen. In the event of 20. 0–0 ♜hc8 21. ♜fc1 ♞xc1+ 22. ♜xc1 ♜xc1+ 23. ♜h2 ♜b8 Black succeeds in activating his rooks. If the rooks are retained, it is not easy for White to create a passed pawn: 21. ♜fd1 (21. ♞d1 a4) 21...♜a7 22. ♜d2 ♞b6 23. ♜c2 ♜xc2 24. ♞xc2 ♜c7 (24...a4 25. ♜c1) 25. ♞a4 ♜a7 etc.

**20...♖hc8**

A critical moment. Focused on a passive stance, Wang Yue misses an opportunity to exploit the position of the king on e2 by 20...d4!. After 21. ♖xd4 ♗xd4 22. exd4 ♗hd8 the pawn is regained: 23. ♕e3 ♖d5+ 24. ♕f3 ♖f6, and in the endgame there is nothing to fear, while if 21. exd4 Black obtains an excellent post at d5 – 21...♗h5+ 22. g4 ♗d5 (Gleizerov).

21. ♖hc1

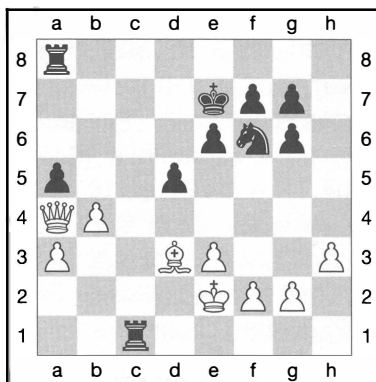
Usually it is not considered dangerous to exchange two rooks for a queen, but in the given specific position the long-range bishop, supporting the passed pawn, may be able to restrict the rooks' mobility.

21...♗xc1

After 21...♗b6 22. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 23. b4 axb4 24. ♖xb4 ♗c7 25. ♗b3, thanks to his outside passed pawn, White has a small but enduring advantage.

22. ♖xc1 ♖xc1 23. b4

(see next diagram)

**23...♔f8?!**

Passive defence has no chance of success. Black should have decided on 23...♖e4!?. In the event of the exchange of minor pieces – 24. ♕xe4 dxe4 25. b5! (after 25. bxa5 ♖c7 26. ♗xe4 ♖ca7 Black picks up both pawns) 25...f5 (25...♖b8!? 26. ♗xa5 ♖bc8 27. ♗b4+ ♖c5 looks tempting, but after 28. f4! the king escapes from the danger) 26. f3 exf3+ 27. ♕xf3 e5 28. ♗b3 it is easier for the rooks to fight against the passed pawn, although even here the chances of saving the game are illusory. However, White is not obliged to exchange his bishop; he can also consider 24. ♕f3!? ♖d2+ 25. ♕f4, and although it looks provocative to bring the king out, Black has no real threats: 25...♕f6 26. bxa5 ♖c4 27. ♗b4 ♖xb5 28. ♗b8 etc.

The other active possibility 23...e5!? is parried by 24. ♕d2 ♖cc8 25. bxa5.

24. bxa5 ♕g8 25. a6

White has a big advantage, but its conversion should take a considerable time.

25...♖c7 26. ♗f4 ♖ca7

26...♖ac8 was more resilient. Now in the event of 27. ♗b4 ♖e4 28. ♗b6 ♖c6



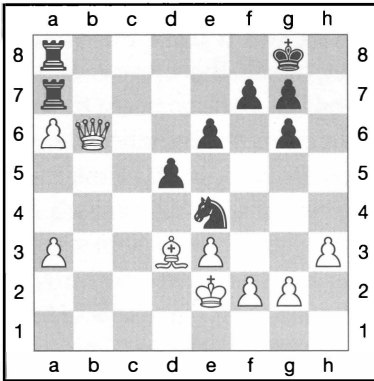
Black somehow holds out, but 27. f3 ♖d7 28. ♖d6 ♗c5 29. ♗b5 is stronger, when White should win.

27. ♖d4!

The queen ties down both rooks. It is no longer possible to return: 27...♖c7 28. ♖b6 ♖ac8 29. a7.

27...♗e4 28. ♖b6

Preventing ...♗d6 with the switching of the knight to c4.



28...e5?

Inappropriate activity, leading to a weakening of Black's position and a rapid defeat. He should have tied the queen to the defence of the a6-pawn – 28...♗f6 29. ♗b5 ♗d7. However, this is a reciprocal linkage. By the cyclic manoeuvre 30. ♖d6 ♗b8 31. ♖d8+ ♗h7 32. ♖b6 ♗d7 33. ♖d4 ♗b8 White gains a tempo for a pawn offensive: 34. a4 ♗g8 (not 34...♖c7? 35. ♖h4+, or

34...♗d7?! 35. ♗c6) 35. h4 ♖c7 36. ♖b6 ♖ca7 37. g4. By advancing h4–h5 at the appropriate moment, White breaks up the king's defences and gains new offensive lines:

- a) 37...♗d7 38. ♖d6 ♗b8 39. ♖d8+ ♗h7 40. h5! ♗xa6 41. h×g6+ f×g6 42. ♖b6 ♗b4 43. ♖xe6;
- b) 37...♗h7 38. h5 g×h5 39. ♗d3+! g6 40. g×h5 ♗xa6 41. h×g6.

29. ♗e1

Eliminating the threat of a check on c3. This same aim would have been achieved by 29. ♖c6 followed by the driving back of the knight and an attack on the central pawns: 29...♖b8 30. f3 ♗f6 31. ♖d6 ♖b2+ 32. ♗d1 or 29...♖d8 30. f3 ♗f6 31. ♖b6 ♖da8 32. ♖c5.

29...♗g5

If 29...♗f6 White attacks with 30. a4 ♗d7 31. ♖d6.

30. ♗b5 ♗e6 31. a4 d4

Black loses after 31...♗c7 32. ♗c6 but, in view of the threat of 32. ♖d6, he also cannot get by without advancing his pawn.

32. a5 ♖c7?

Overlooking the loss of the exchange. But 32...d×e3 33. f×e3 ♗f8 34. ♖d6 would have led to the loss of the e-pawn.

33. ♗c6

Black resigned.

For Carlsen the next super-tournament, the Sparkassen GM in Dortmund (FIDE category 20), followed a similar pattern to the tournament in Sofia. The final result was also similar. In the first round Magnus won against Jakovenko, and after a present in the 5th round from Naiditsch, who blundered a pawn, he could only be stopped by Kramnik, who by tradition is especially formidable in Dortmund (he already had nine victories to his credit). Carlsen played against the favourite as though sleep-walking, making mistakes in a fairly simple position. Defeat in the decisive game, the third in



that year (after Wijk aan Zee and Sofia), was a warning symptom in the forming of his champion's character. However, in such company it is not customary to call a share of 2nd–4th places a failure.

Game 52

M. Carlsen – D. Jakovenko

Dortmund 2009

Ruy Lopez [C67]

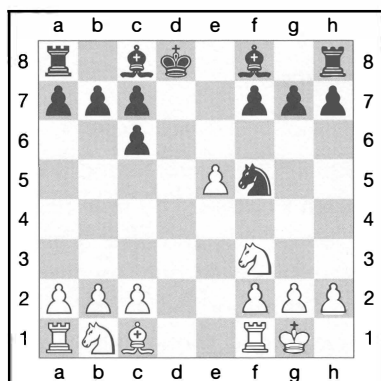
1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♗c6 3. ♙b5 ♖f6

The Berlin Defence was employed when the study of the Ruy Lopez was still in its infancy, including matches involving the first world champion Wilhelm Steinitz. But for its popularity in the 21st century it is indebted to Vladimir Kramnik, after he revealed it as his main weapon against 1. e4 in his match for the world championship with Garry Kasparov in 2000 in London.

**4. 0–0 ♗xe4 5. d4 ♗d6 6. ♙xc6 dxc6
7. dxe5 ♖f5 8. ♚xd8+**

White has no reason to avoid the queen exchange, since 8. ♚e2 ♗d4 9. ♗xd4 ♚xd4 10. ♗d1 ♙g4 leads to the same thing, while the attempt to be stubborn with 10. ♗c3 ♙e6 11. ♗d1 ♚c4 12. ♗d3 ♙c5 gives Black a comfortable game. For example, if 13. ♗e4?! there follows 13... ♙f5.

8...♙xd8



The starting position of the variation, which since the time of the Kasparov–Kramnik match has been called the ‘Berlin Wall’. Even the 13th world champion was unable to breach it. As for Dmitry Jakovenko, like no one else he knows about its solidity, since he has often attacked it from the white side. However, while the choice of this defence against Carlsen has a psychological implication, it can hardly be deemed a successful one. Everyone knows with what pleasure Magnus plays a complicated endgame, albeit with a small but enduring advantage. In the given position White can hope to make use of his pawn majority on the kingside.

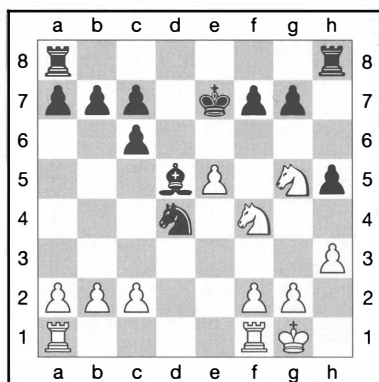
9. ♗c3 ♙e8

Kramnik played 9... ♙d7 and moved his king to c8, but later experience in defending the Berlin Wall recommends keeping the king in the centre. Therefore Black moves it away from possible checks on g5 and d1.

10. h3 h5 11. ♗e2 ♙e7 12. ♙g5 ♙e6

This path was laid by one of the best Soviet defensive players, Ratmir Kholmov. The plan with the development of the bishop at b7 has been tried by the Chinese grandmaster Wang Yue, who also has the reputation of being an expert on the Berlin Wall.

**13. ♗f4 ♙d5 14. ♙xe7 ♙xe7 15. ♗g5
♗d4**



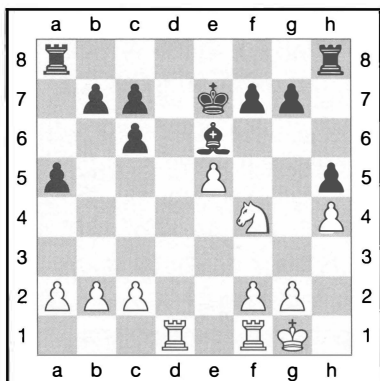
16. ♖ad1

Strictly speaking, a novelty. But you don't have to be a Carlsen to make such a logical move – in the given situation the rooks are best deployed in the centre at d1 and e1, since all the same Black will not capture the c2-pawn (15...♙xc2? 16. ♙xd5+ cxd5 17. ♖c1). Nevertheless, previously 16. ♜fd1 was played. For example, the game Hracek–Kholmov (Pardubice 1999) continued 16...♙e6 17. ♙xe6 ♙xe6 18. h4 ♖d8 19. f3 g6 20. ♜f2 ♙f5 21. c3 f6 22. exf6 ♜xf6 23. ♙e2 c5 with equal play.

16...♙e6 17. ♙gxe6 ♙xe6 18. h4

It is important not only to fix the h5-pawn, but also to secure the knight at f4 against ...g7–g5.

18...a5



By the march of the pawn to a4 Black prepares the development of his rook via a5, and at the same time he threatens to capture the a2-pawn, since the bishop cannot be cut off by b2–b3 on account of ...a5–a4.

19. a3 a4 20. ♜fe1 g6 21. f3 ♜a5

22. c3 ♜b5 23. ♜e2 ♜a8 24. ♖d4 ♜aa5 25. ♜f2

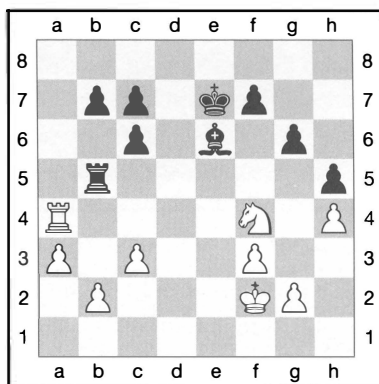
In the event of 25. ♜b4 ♜xb4 26. cxb4 ♜b5 27. ♜f2 Black plays 27...c5.

25...♜xe5

As a rule, it is sound practice to exchange a wing pawn for a central one. In addition, in the given specific position Black eliminates White's main advantage in the Berlin Wall – his pawn majority on the kingside.

26. ♜xe5 ♜xe5 27. ♜xa4 ♜b5

27...b6 28. ♜a7 ♜d6 is also possible, with approximate equality.



It is hard to imagine that Black can lose such a solid position, but one of Carlsen's strengths is his ability to exploit the slightest chances, the opponent only needing to weaken his concentration.

28. b4 c5 29. ♜a7



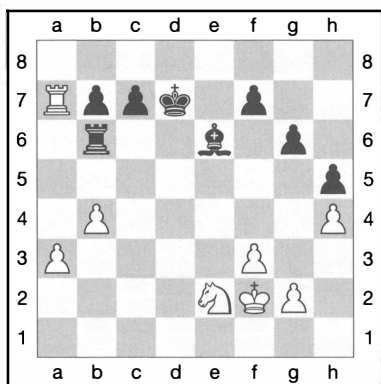
White could have won a pawn: 29. ♖x6 ♗x6 30. c4 ♖b6 31. bxc5, but the transition into a rook endgame would have dispelled all his illusions: 31... ♖b3 32. ♖b4 ♖xa3 33. ♖xb7 ♔d7 with a draw.

29...cxb4 30. cxb4 ♔d7

This would appear to be an insignificant transposition of moves, but it allows White to improve the position of his king. The accurate 30... ♗c4 31. ♔e3 ♔d6 would have restricted White's possibilities.

31. ♔e2! ♖b6

Another slight inaccuracy. Black should not have conceded the 5th rank to White, which he can use for an attack on the h5-pawn after preparing g2–g4. 31... ♗c8 was simpler, not fearing 32. ♔d4 ♖e5.



32. ♗e3 ♗c4

The rook's position should have been improved – 32... ♖d6, intending 33. ♖xb7 ♖a6.

33. ♔d4 ♗d6?

Here also it was not too late for 33... ♖d6.

34. ♖a5!

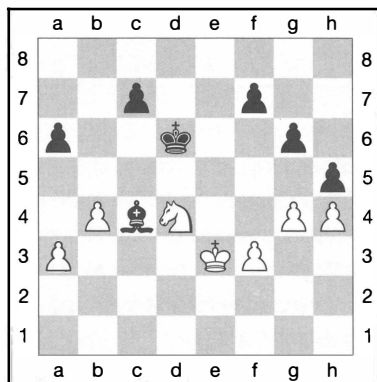
Now g2–g4 is threatened, with the idea of creating an outside passed pawn on the kingside.

34...♖a6?

The decisive mistake. The exchange of rooks only favours White. Black should have retreated with 34... ♗e6.

35. ♖xa6+ bxa6 36. g4!

After this move the game is decided. Black faces a dilemma: whether to allow the creation of an outside passed pawn, or a weakness on h5.



36...h×g4

Black follows the first course. The second would also have lost. Play involving 36... c5 is too late: 37. g×h5! g×h5 (37... cxd4+ 38. ♔xd4) 38. ♔f5 ♗e5 39. ♔g3. No better is 36... ♗e5 37. g×h5 g×h5 38. f4+ ♗f6 (or 38... ♗d5 39. ♔f5 ♗b3 40. ♔g7 ♗d1 41. ♔e8! etc.) 39. ♗e4 ♗a2 40. a4, and in view of the threat of a4–a5 and b4–b5 Black has to go in for new concessions – 40... ♗e7 41. ♔f5+ ♗f6 42. ♔g3.

37. f×g4 ♗e5 38. ♔c6+ ♗f6 39. ♗f4 ♗e6 40. h5! g×h5 41. g×h5 ♗d3

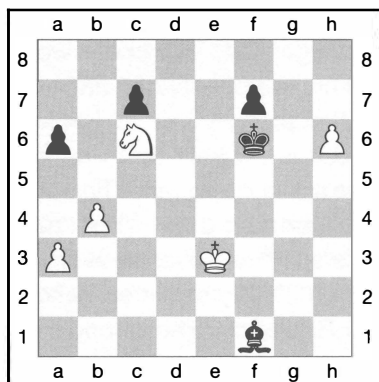
Also after other continuations the coordination of the h-pawn with the knight is decisive. For example: 41... f6 42. ♔d8+ ♗e7 43. h6 ♗d3 44. ♔b7 ♗f7 45. ♔c5 ♗f1 46. h7 ♗g7 47. ♔e6+ ♗xh7 48. ♗f5, and after capturing the f6-pawn White also picks up the remaining pawns.

42. ♗e3!



The king moves closer to the queenside. **44. ♖e5!**

42...♗f1 43. h6 ♕f6



A study-like theme! The knight is attacking the f7-pawn.

**44...♗b5 45. ♕d4 ♗a4 46. h7 ♕g7
47. ♖xf7 ♕xh7 48. ♖g5+ ♕g6 49. ♖e6**

Black resigned.

For any representative of the elite (apart from those seeking the champion's regalia), consistently finishing in the top three in tournaments can in no way be regarded as a failure. For any, but not for Carlsen. His swift rise implied other summits. He himself realised that, despite outward successes, in recent times he had slowed down and too often finished on the immediate approaches to the tournament pedestal.

The kind of stupor that had occurred with Carlsen did not go unnoticed. After Dortmund there was a storm of criticism. The comment by Konstantin Landa, published in the magazine *64 Shakhmatnoe obozrenie*, looks quite fair: 'What, in my view, is preventing the Norwegian from conquering the summits? Previously chess was his favourite game, he was called the second Fischer, a genius...but at some point for Magnus it became difficult everyday work (which in fact is true; powerful preparation is needed). Serious mistakes are occurring, and even one-move blunders are creeping in. I don't know what he is doing and how he is preparing with his trainers, but, in my view, the freshness in his play has gone. Something needs to be changed!'

This did not last long. After all, Carlsen himself realised perfectly well that it was unfair to put his problems down to fate. For everything you have to answer yourself, and in particular you have to get to the bottom of what is happening. One of the causes hindering his further progress was quite obvious. He needed to review his own conception of work on the opening, since a correctly organised game would lead to comfortable play. Apparently help was also needed in overcoming a certain psychological barrier, which was hindering his further improvement.

Help for the strongest player in the West came from the East. In the late summer of 2009 sensational news flew round the chess world. Garry Kasparov had begun working with Magnus Carlsen! From two weeks in August they trained in Croatia, and then they worked for a few days in September. Apart from face-to-face meetings, chess



problems were regularly discussed by email and Skype. The results were immediately apparent! After his contact with the Maestro, Magnus began appreciating more deeply the importance of opening organisation. This was undoubtedly an important result of his contact with Kasparov! The results of the collaboration were already seen in October at the super-tournament in Nanjing (FIDE category 21). The chess world was staggered by the ease with which Carlsen defeated his opponents one after another, allotting them the role of observers in the battle for first prize.

In the history of tournaments of such standard it is unlikely that one can find an analogue of the first half, when four of Magnus's five opponents finished on a minus score, the exception being Wang Yue, who gained a draw. Their 'minuses' clubbed together to make Magnus's 'plus'. Garry's shadow hovered over Magnus in the very first round, when in a Scotch Game he confidently defeated Leko. There then followed wins over Topalov, Jakovenko and Radjabov. The confidence and strength issuing from Magnus were admirable. 'It seems to me that an enormous role is played in particular by the emotional aspect of this collaboration,' commented Alexey Kuzmin, who was present at the tournament. 'For Carlsen such contact, apart from the undoubted chess benefit, also has a great psychological effect. Carlsen's responsibility has sharply increased: he is now answerable not only to himself, but also to Garry Kimovich.'

In the second half of the tournament Carlsen eased off, but he ended with the enormous (for such a uniformly strong field) lead over his nearest rivals of 2½ points. Such a thing was achieved only by Alexander Alekhine in the years of his greatest achievements!

From the very first rounds the play of his main rivals gave the impression of a kind of doom. 'If was as though Magnus did not do anything at all, except that, like a python, he simply appeared on the path and lay down,' the reviewer of the Chesspro website, Sergey Zagrebelsky, picturesquely commented on his play. But if you dig deeper, in the games with Leko and Topalov the strategy of playing for restriction can be traced.

Game 53

M. Carlsen – P. Leko

Nanjing 2009

Scotch Game [C45]

Before this game Peter Leko was the only representative of the elite who Carlsen had not succeeded in beating in play with the classical time control. He was the first to experience the consequences of the collaboration of the young Norwegian with Garry Kasparov.

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. d4

Here it is, the first sign! Up till then the Scotch Game did not appear in Carlsen's repertoire, whereas in Kasparov's it used to occupy an honourable place. Among those to suffer was Leko.

3...exd4 4. ♘xd4 ♙c5

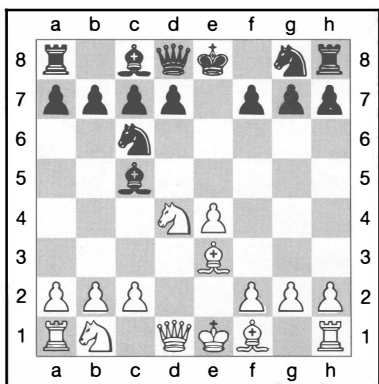
For those who like history we will also give Leko's only 'Scotch' experience with Kasparov (Tilburg 1997). Peter went in for a re-



serve variation: 4...♙b4+ 5. c3 ♙c5 6. ♖xc6 bxc6 7. ♙d3 ♖h4 8. ♖e2 ♗f6 9. h3 0–0, where he decided to try and refute Garry's pawn offensive 10. g3 ♖h5 11. g4 ♖e5 12. g5 with the piece sacrifice 12...♗xe4? 13. ♙xe4 ♗e8 14. ♙f3 ♖xe2+ 15. ♙xe2 ♙a6 16. c4 ♙xc4 17. ♗c3 and lost.

5. ♙e3

One of the main opening trends, along with 5. ♖xc6 bxc6 or 5...♖f6 6. ♖d2 dxc6, which in recent times has occurred more often.



5...♖f6 6. c3 ♗ge7 7. ♙c4 ♗e5 8. ♙e2 ♖g6 9. 0–0 d6

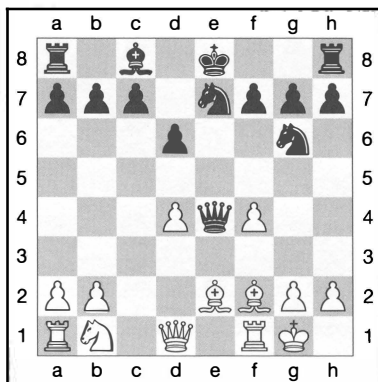
The sharp continuation 9...d5 10. ♙h5! ♖xe4 11. ♗d2 allows White to develop a strong initiative. For example, the game Ehlvest–Belavsky (World Cup, Reykjavik 1991) went 11...♖d3 12. ♗d4f3 ♙d6 (12...♙xe3 13. ♗e5 ♖xd2 14. ♖f3! favours White) 13. ♗xe5 ♙xe5 14. ♙c5 g6 15. ♙e2 ♖f5 16. ♗f3 ♙f6 17. ♗e1 0–0 18. ♙d3 ♖d7 19. ♗e5 ♖d8 20. ♖f3 ♗g7 21. h4! and Black came under an attack.

10. f4

Sergey Rublevsky, one of the main Scotch devotees, usually sacrifices the pawn with a prophylactic king move – 10. ♗h1 ♖xe4

11. ♗d2 ♖g6 12. ♗b5.

10...♖xe4 11. ♙f2 ♙xd4 12. cxd4 ♗5g6

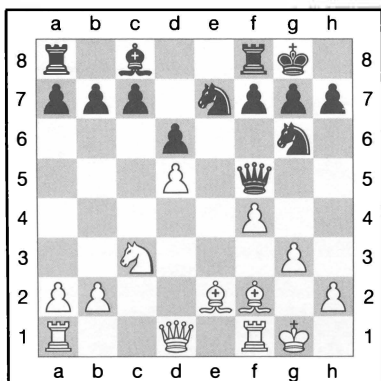


13. g3!?

This move, which was introduced by Morozevich, takes the game onto positional lines: after defending the f4-pawn, White intends d4–d5, when the two bishops are a real advantage. The attempt to link this idea with 13. ♗c3 ♖xf4 and now 14. d5! (14. ♗b5 0–0 15. ♗xc7 ♗b8 16. d5 is usually played, but after 16...b6 followed by ...♙b7 White's initiative comes to a standstill) was tried in the game Mikhalchishin–Belavsky (Lviv 2002): 14...0–0 15. ♗b5 ♙d7 16. ♗xc7 ♗ac8 17. ♗c1 ♖g5 18. ♙xa7 ♙h3 19. ♙f3 ♗h4 20. ♖e2 ♗eg6 21. ♙e3 ♖e7 22. ♗b5 ♗xg2 23. ♖xc8 ♗xe3 24. ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 25. ♗e1 ♗f4 26. ♖xe3 ♖g5+ 27. ♗f2 ♖h4+ 28. ♗g1 ♖g5+ ½–½.

13...0–0?!

A careless move, allowing White to carry out the main idea of 13. g3. Black played more energetically in the game Morozevich–Kramnik (Dortmund 2001): 13...♙h3! 14. ♙f3 ♖f5 15. ♗e1 d5 16. ♖b3 0–0 (16...0–0–0 is also interesting) 17. ♗c3 c6 18. ♖xb7 ♗fb8 19. ♖c7 ♖f6 ½–½.

**14. ♖c3 ♜f5 15. d5****15...a6**

The positional pressure could have been avoided only by returning the pawn: 15...c5!? 16. dxc6 ♖xc6 17. ♜xd6 ♜d8 18. ♜a3 ♙e6 19. ♜f6 ♖ge7, when Black succeeds in coordinating his pieces. For example: 20. ♙f3 ♜g6 21. ♜ac1 ♙g4 22. ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 23. ♙g2, and although White retains pressure on the queenside, the position is defensible. In the opinion of Arshak Petrosian, consideration should also have been given to the return of the queen to the rear – 15...♜d7!? followed by the fianchetto of the bishop, tying White to the defence of the d5-pawn.

16. ♜e1 ♙h8!?

An interesting idea. Black intends to transfer his knight to f6. Carlsen thinks that Black's problems would hardly be solved by 16...b5 17. a3, since he cannot play 17...♙b7? on account of 18. ♙g4 ♜f6 19. ♙d4, when the queen is trapped. But here also it was not too late for 16...♜d7, when Black holds the position.

17. ♜c1 ♙d7 18. ♙f3!

A multi-purpose move: White not only de-

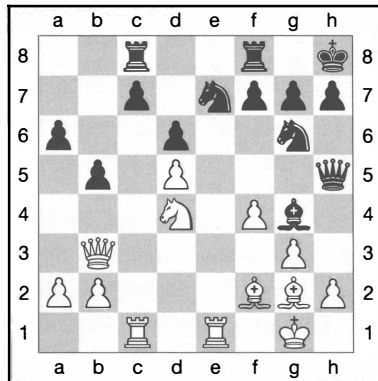
fends the d5-pawn, relieving the queen of this duty, but also prepares the centralisation of his knight via ♖c3–e2–d4, attacking the queen with gain of tempo.

18...♜ac8 19. ♜b3 b5

19...b6 was more circumspect, hindering the attack on the pawn weaknesses.

20. ♖e2 ♜h3 21. ♖d4 ♙g4?

A loss of time. 21...♖g8! was correct. Now the attempt to win a pawn by 22. ♜a3 ♖f6 23. ♜xa6 runs into 23...♖g4, when after 24. ♙xg4?! ♜xg4 White's light-square periphery is weakened. Also insufficient is 22. ♖c6 ♖f6 23. ♙g2 ♜f5 (23...♜h5? 24. ♙d4) with a defensible position. 22. ♙g2 is more accurate, provoking 22...♜h5, and now 23. ♖c6 ♜fe8 followed by ...♖g8–f6 with a tenable position.

22. ♙g2 ♜h5**23. h4!**

'The key move. Now all the black pieces on the kingside look rather stupid, while the black queenside pawns are ripe for harvesting.' (Carlsen)

23...♖g8

Now this manoeuvre is too late, but Black's position is so compromised, that it is hard



to offer him any good advice. Apparently there was no longer any way of saving the game. If 23...♔d7 there follows 24. ♖c3 with the doubling of the rooks.

24. ♖c6 ♜f6 25. ♖xa6

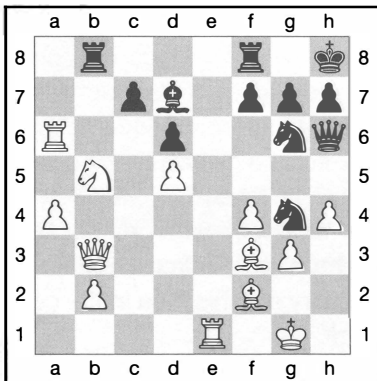
The gathering of the harvest begins.

25...♔d7

25...♖fe8 26. ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 27. ♖a7! is also hopeless for Black.

26. ♜xb5 ♖b8 27. a4 ♜g4 28. ♔f3 ♜h6

Black also cannot be satisfied with 28...♜f5 29. ♔e4 ♜h5 30. ♖a7.



29. ♜c4

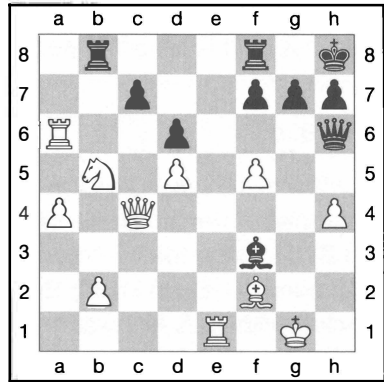
'I spent quite a bit of time around here trying to allow as little counterplay as possible. With this move I prevent 29...♜xf2 30. ♜xf2 ♜xh4.' (Carlsen)

29...♜xh4

Desperation, but otherwise Black will suffocate.

30. ♔xg4 ♔xg4 31. gxh4 ♔f3 32. f5

Only accuracy is required of White – the check at g6 was threatened.



32...♜h5 33. ♜f4 ♔xd5 34. ♜xc7 ♔b7 35. ♖b6 f6 36. ♔d4 ♜f7 37. ♜e6 ♖g8 38. ♜f2 ♖bc8 39. ♔c3 ♔d5 40. a5 ♖c4 41. ♜d4 ♔a8 42. ♜xd6 ♜h5 43. ♜f4 ♖cc8 44. ♖be6

Black resigned.

Game 54

M. Carlsen – V. Topalov
Nanjing 2009
King's Indian Defence [E90]

In 2009 Veselin Topalov headed the FIDE rating list, but surprisingly, it was against him that Carlsen played especially successfully, compared with the other representatives of the top ten. After the tournament in Nanjing he improved the score to 5–3 (with 4 draws).

1. d4 ♜f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♜c3 ♔g7 4. e4 d6 5. ♜f3 0–0 6. h3

Carlsen avoids the Classical Variation, beginning with 6. ♔e2, and prepares the development of his dark-square bishop at e3.

6...♜a6

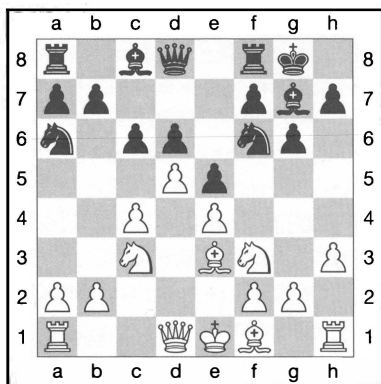
The main continuation here is 6...e5 7. d5

a5 or 7...♖a6. Also, 6...c5, which is more in accordance with Topalov's style, is often played.

7. ♖e3 e5 8. d5

The relieving of the pawn tension 8. dxe5 dxe5 is harmless after the queen exchange 9. ♖xd8 ♖xd8, since the e5-pawn is indirectly defended (10. ♖xe5 ♖xe4). But Black has to reckon with 9. c5. For example, in the game Radjabov–V. Milov (Warsaw 2005) after 9...♖b4 10. ♖a4 a5 11. ♖d1 ♖e7 12. a3 ♖c6 White could have gained an advantage by 13. ♖b5!?. However, here too 9...♖xd1+ 10. ♖xd1 ♖b4 would have relieved Black's problems: 11. ♖d2 ♖e6 12. a3 ♖a2 13. ♖xa2 ♖xa2 14. ♖d3 ♖fd8 with the idea of 15. 0–0 ♖xd3 16. ♖xd4 ♖c4.

8...c6



Kasparov preferred the classical 8...♖h5 with the idea of playing the knight to f4 and advancing ...f7–f5. In the game C. Hansen–Kasparov (Svendborg 1990) White forestalled this by 9. ♖h2 ♖e8 10. ♖e2, but nevertheless Kasparov carried out this idea with a pawn sacrifice – 10...f5! 11. exf5 ♖f4. Now, as in a number of similar variations, the exchange of the f4-knight is advantageous to Black: 12. ♖xf4 exf4 13. f×g6

♖×g6 14. ♖g4 ♖×g4 15. h×g4 ♖ae8+ 16. ♖f1 ♖c5 (Kasparov). The game continued 12. 0–0 ♖xf5 (12...♖xe2+ 13. ♖xe2 g×f5 is also possible) 13. ♖e1 ♖f7 14. ♖f1, and here, according to Kasparov's analysis, Black could have maintained equality by 14...♖b4! 15. ♖g3 ♖c2 16. ♖xf4 ♖xe1 17. ♖xf5 g×f5 18. ♖d2 ♖×g2 19. ♖×g2 ♖h8 with complicated play.

9. g4!

White prevents Black's standard play on the kingside.

9...♖c5 10. ♖d2 a5 11. a3

White prepares to drive away the knight. After the standard development 11. ♖c2 ♖e8 12. 0–0–0 f5 Black has sufficient counterplay. With a Sämisch structure there is the interesting idea of switching the dark-square bishop to the queenside: 11. f3 ♖fd7 12. h4 ♖f6 13. ♖f2 ♖e8 14. ♖e2 ♖d8 15. ♖c2 ♖b6 with complicated play (Kolev–Kaminski, Odessa 1989). Topalov tries to carry out this idea in the course of the game.

11...♖fd7

Black prepares not only ...f7–f5, but also a bind on the queenside with ...a5–a4, which does not work immediately – 11...a4 12. ♖xc5 dxc5 13. ♖xa4.

12. ♖g1

12. b4 is premature: 12...axb4 13. axb4 ♖xa1 14. ♖xa1 ♖a6 15. ♖a3 c5 and the knight establishes itself at b4. The move in the game has the aim of preventing ...f7–f5.

12...a4 13. ♖c2 ♖b6 14. 0–0–0 ♖d7 15. ♖b1 c×d5

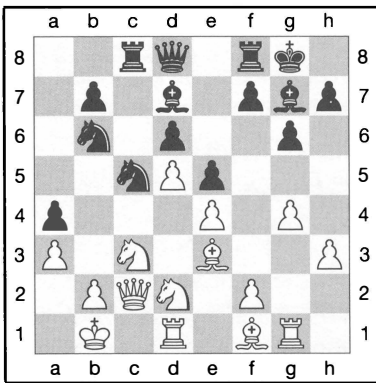
Black determines the pawn structure too



soon, which is immediately exploited by Carlsen. The prophylactic 15...♔h8, preparing ...f7–f5, was more in the spirit of the position.

16. cxd5 ♖c8

16...♖a5 came into consideration, when although the rook occupies an unusual position for the King's Indian Defence (usually the queen is brought out to a5), it performs the important task of supporting the knight on c5 and controlling the b5-square.



17. ♗b5!

Who said that Carlsen lacks 'schooling'? The move in the game as though copies the style of Tigran Petrosian, who knew all about such exchanges. White exchanges his 'bad' bishop (which is running up against his own pawn chains) for the 'good' bishop on d7.

17...♗xb5 18. ♘xb5 ♖d7 19. ♘c3 ♗f6?!

A rather artificial manoeuvre. Black takes his bishop to a5, but, as the song goes 'the road is long'. And if it is taken into account that a barrier – the knight on b6 – will have to be removed, which will weaken the defence of the a4-pawn, doubts begin to

creep in about the prospects of the bishop manoeuvre.

Meanwhile, the position demanded a more concrete decision – the preparation of ...b7–b5. This would have been answered by 19...♖c7!? 20. h4 ♖a8 21. h5 ♘c8 or the immediate 19...♖a8!?, preparing ...♘c8 and ...b7–b5.

20. g5

In contrast to his opponent, Magnus's play is always concrete. He 'urges' the bishop towards its dubious goal and prepares an attack on the king.

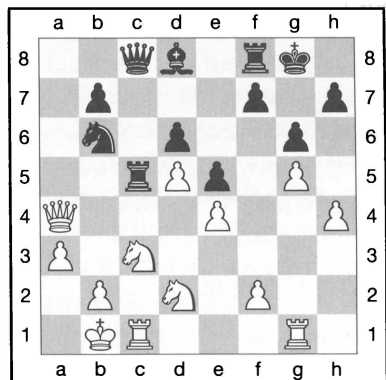
20...♗d8

Black should have admitted the faultiness of his idea and reverted to the plan with the preparation of ...b7–b5 – 20...♗g7 21. h4 ♖c7 22. h5 ♖a8 23. ♖h1 ♘c8.

21. h4! ♘a8?

If this is a pawn sacrifice, then for what benefits? But Black's pieces are so uncoordinated, that possibly this is an attempt to bring them together. An intervention such as 21...♖h3 22. ♖h1 ♖g4 23. h5 merely assists White's initiative.

22. ♗xc5! ♖xc5 23. ♖xa4 ♖c8 24. ♖c1 ♘b6





An admission of the failure of the idea 24...♔a5, after which there follows 25. ♖g3 with the threat of b2–b4.

25. ♖d1!

Carlsen, as we know, is able to deploy his pieces in their best positions. If White places his queen in an advanced post with 25. ♖b4, the black queen sets off on a journey into the opponent's rear – 25...♖h3 26. ♘b3 ♖c8 27. ♖h1 ♖f3, eyeing not only the f2-pawn, but also the queenside. For example, if 28. ♖xd6?! Black can sacrifice the exchange – 28...♖xc3 29. bxc3 ♖xe4+, causing the king to become nervous: 30. ♔a1 ♘c4 31. ♖b4 ♔e7! 32. ♖xe7 ♖a8.

25...♖h3 26. ♖f3 ♖d7

26...♖xh4? 27. ♖g4 leads to the loss of the queen, while after the queen exchange 26...♖xf3 27. ♘xf3 ♘c4 White sets about converting his pawn majority: 28. b4! ♖c8 29. ♘b5 with the threat of doubling rooks on the c-file. For example, if 29...f6 there can follow 30. ♖c2 ♘b6 31. ♖xc8 ♘xc8 32. ♖c1 ♔e7 33. ♖c7 with a decisive rook invasion, while in the event of 29...f5 30. exf5 ♖xf5 31. ♖xc4! ♖xc4 32. ♘xd6 ♖xb4+ 33. axb4 ♖xf3 34. ♘xb7 ♔b6 35. d6 Black has to reckon with the passed pawns.

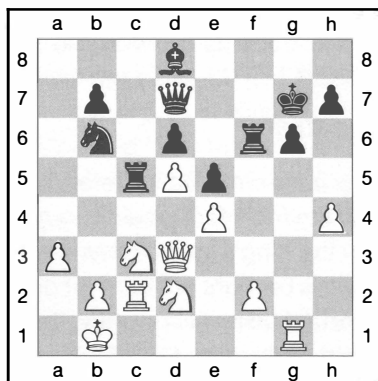
27. ♖d3

27. h5 suggests itself, but with an extra pawn 'in hand' Magnus does not rush, preferring prophylaxis in the event of possible counterplay for Black such as ...♔e7, ...♘c4 and ...♖fc8.

27...♔g7 28. ♖c2 f6

28...♖h8 followed by ...h7–h6 would possibly have given Black better chances.

29. gxf6+ ♖xf6



30. h5!

When an attack can be launched, Magnus is not afraid to sacrifice material.

30...♖xf2 31. hxg6 h6

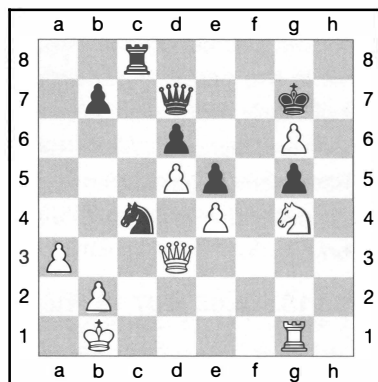
If 31...hxg6 there follows 32. ♖xg6+ ♔xg6 33. ♖g3+ ♔g5 34. ♖xf2.

32. ♘d1!

Simplification is the most effective way of converting the material advantage.

32...♖xc2 33. ♘xf2 ♖c8 34. ♘g4 ♔g5

35. ♘f3 ♘c4 36. ♘xg5 hxg5



37. ♘e3

Only here does Carlsen make an error. 37. ♖h3! ♘d2+ 38. ♔a2 ♖h8 39. ♖xh8+! ♔xh8 40. ♖h1+ ♔g7 41. ♖h7+ was more forceful.



37...♖xe3 38. ♜xe3 ♜a4

By playing 38...♜e7 39. ♜xg5 ♜h8 Black could have retarded, but not prevented White's offensive – 40. ♜f5!.

39. ♜xg5 ♜xe4+ 40. ♜a1 ♜e8 41. ♜c1

Black resigned.

Game 55

M. Carlsen – T. Radjabov

Nanjing 2009

Sicilian Defence [B30]

1. e4 c5 2. ♖f3 ♖c6 3. ♗b5!

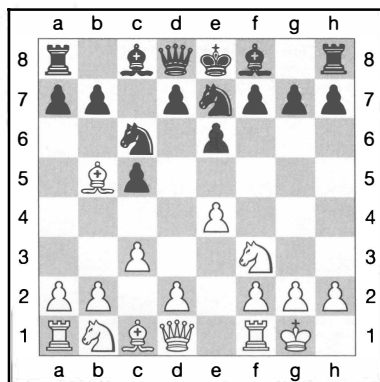
A pragmatic approach, typical of the 'new' Carlsen. In the main branches of the Chelyabinsk Variation Radjabov has analysed everything, and there is no point in competing with him in knowledge. It is more logical to switch to positional lines, where Magnus is stronger. Especially since in Linares that year they had already played a very interesting game in this variation.

3...e6

The greatest expert on this variation, Evgeny Sveshnikov, considers this move to be the strongest. Earlier Radjabov chose other variations, but did not play them in the best way. For example, the game Grischuk–Radjabov (Moscow 2002) went 3...d6 4. 0–0 ♗d7 5. ♜e1 ♖f6 6. c3 a6 7. ♗f1 ♗g4 8. d3 ♗xf3 9. ♜xf3 g6 10. ♜d1 ♗g7 11. ♖d2 0–0 12. ♖f3 ♖g4 13. a3 ♜c8 14. ♜b1 ♖ge5 15. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 16. ♗g5 ♜d7 17. ♜d2 ♜fe8 18. ♜bc1 b5 19. h3 ♖c6 20. ♗e3 with comfortable play for White.

4. 0–0 ♖ge7 5. c3

Other solid continuations are 5. b3 and 5. ♜e1. Carlsen sticks to central strategy.



5...a6 6. ♗a4 b5

6...c4 7. ♜e2 b5 8. ♗c2 ♖g6 prevents White from setting up a powerful centre, but he gains the opportunity to attack the queenside – 9. b3!.

7. ♗c2 ♗b7

The central pawn counter 7...d5 8. e5 d4 9. ♗e4 ♖d5 leads to a very complicated position. For example, the rapid game Shirov–Ivanchuk (Tallinn 2006) continued 10. d3 ♗b7 11. c4 ♖b6 12. ♗f4 ♗e7 13. ♖bd2 g5 14. ♗g3 h5 15. h3 ♜d7 16. ♜e1 0–0–0 17. cxb5 axb5 18. a4?! ♖xa4 19. ♖c4 bxc4 20. ♜xa4 cxd3 21. ♜xd3, and the position was so complicated that only the players themselves could understand it.

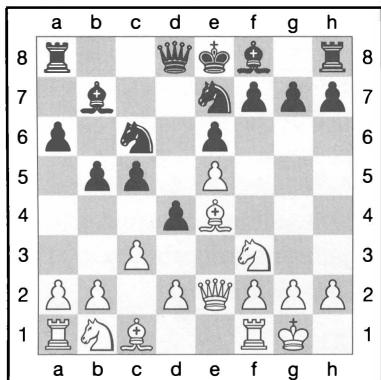
8. ♜e2 d5

In Linares 2009 Radjabov played 8...♖g6 against Carlsen. There followed 9. d4 cxd4 10. cxd4 ♜c8 11. a3 ♗e7 12. ♖c3 0–0 13. ♜d1 ♖a5 14. g3 ♖c4 15. h4 ♖xa3 16. bxa3 (16. ♗b3!?) 16...♜xc3 17. h5 ♜c7 18. ♗d3 ♖h8 19. ♗b2 ♜b3 20. ♜ac1 ♜a5 21. d5 ♗xa3 22. ♗xa3 ♜xa3 23. ♜e3 with sharp play, where White has compensation for the sacrificed pawns.

The inclusion of 8...c4 9. b3 d5 would have led after 10. exd5 ♖xd5 11. bxc4 ♗f4 12. ♖e3 ♕d6 to a very complicated position, where Black has real counterplay.

8...g6 is a logical continuation, and it may possibly be the theme of future encounters.

9. e5 d4 10. ♕e4



10...♕b6?!

A rather rare move. The main move is 10...♗d5, as Kasparov himself played in a rapid game against Grischuk (Moscow 2002). The continuation was 11. cxd4 ♗xd4 12. ♗xd4 cxd4 13. a4 b4 14. d3 ♖c7 15. f4! ♖c8 16. ♗d2 ♗e3 17. ♖f3 ♕xe4 18. dxe4 d3! 19. ♖xd3 ♗c2 20. ♖b1 ♗e1, and Black won the exchange.

10...♗g6 looks insufficiently logical: 11. cxd4 cxd4 12. d3 ♕e7 13. g3! 0-0 14. h4 with an unpleasant initiative for White on the kingside.

11. d3

11. a4 deserved consideration, but Carlsen, a devotee of the classical style of play, wants to complete his development as soon as possible.

11...♖d8 12. a4

A standard device, with which White opens the file for his rook. Black cannot prevent this: 12...b4 weakens the c4-square, which will be occupied by the knight on b1. If 12. ♕g5 White has to reckon with 12...h6 13. ♕h4 g5 14. ♕g3 ♕g7.

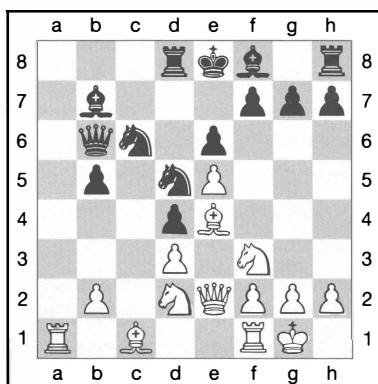
12...♗d5 13. axb5 axb5 14. cxd4

The exchanging operation 14. ♕g5 ♕e7 15. ♕xd5 ♖xd5 16. ♕xe7 ♗xe7 17. ♗a3 ♖d7 18. c4 b4 19. ♗b5 0-0 would not have given White anything real.

14...cxd4

The knight exchange 14...♗xd4 15. ♗xd4 cxd4 would have opened the way for the white queen to the kingside: 16. ♕g5 ♖c8 17. ♗a3 ♕e7 18. ♕xd5 ♕xd5 19. ♕xe7 ♗xe7 20. ♖g4 and it is not easy for the king to find a quiet refuge (20...♖hd8 21. ♖h4+ ♗e8 22. ♖xh7 etc.).

15. ♗bd2



15...♗f4?

It was more logical for Black to complete his development by 15...♕e7 16. ♗b3 0-0 17. ♕g5, when White merely retains the advantage of the first move. But Radjabov, with his active style, is aiming to seize the initiative.



16. ♖d1 ♜b4?!

16...♜g6 was safer. But Teimour did not declare war, in order to retreat!

17. ♜b3 ♙xe4 18. dxe4 ♜fd3

All in the same style – only forward! But 18...♜g6 19.♜fxd4 ♜xe5 20. ♖h5 ♜c4 21. ♙g5 would no longer have solved the main problem – the rapid development of the pieces.

19. ♙g5

19...♙e7? will not do, since after 20. ♙xe7 ♜xe7 21. ♖d2 Black has problems with his knights. For example, 21...♙e8 22. ♜c1 ♜xc1 23. ♖xb4+.

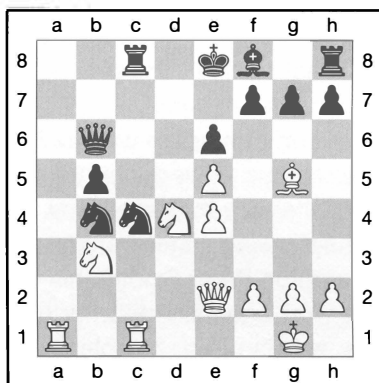
19...♙c8 20.♜fxd4 ♜xb2

If 20...♜xe5 there follows 21. ♙a5!, winning the b5-pawn. The development of the kingside would also have led to the loss of this pawn: 20...h6 21. ♙e3 ♖b7 22. f3 ♜xe5 23. ♖e2 ♙e7 24. ♙a5 0–0 25. ♙xb5.

21. ♖e2 ♜c4 22. ♙fc1

Participation in the Tal Memorial Tournament has particular implications for Carlsen. It is not only a matter of continuing the strong rivalry with the best players in the world, but also an opportunity to make contact with the rich chess and cultural traditions of Moscow. The first tournament after the fairy-tale victory in Nanjing also imposed certain obligations. Something extraordinary was expected of Magnus, although certain reviewers warned that a repetition of Nanjing was not possible in Moscow. And it was not only a matter of the very high level of the participants (FIDE category 21), but above all the powerful potential of the grandmasters themselves. After all, most of them, to some degree or other, were products of the famous Soviet Chess School and were in the top ten of the world rating list.

In the very first round he had to withstand the pressure of Vladimir Kramnik, who with Black literally right from the opening forced Carlsen onto the defensive. But the following series of draws had a quite mundane explanation: during the first days



22...♙c5?

22...♙e7 was better, although here too after 23. ♜xb5 ♖xb5 24. ♙xe7 ♜xe7 25. ♙a7+ ♜f8 26. ♙a5 ♖b6 27. ♙xc4 White has a very dangerous initiative.

23. ♜xb5! 0–0?

Overlooking the loss of a piece. True, 23...♙xf2+ 24. ♖xf2 ♖xb5 25. ♖e2 0–0 26. ♜d4 ♖c5 27. ♙e3 would also have led to an obvious advantage for White.

24. ♜xc5 ♜xe5

Things would not have been changed by 24...♙xc5 25. ♙e7 ♖xb5 26. ♙xc5.

25. ♙e7

Black resigned.

Magnus was unwell, and in such a condition he was unable to play for a win. The turning point came in the second half of the tournament, when after five rounds the main favourites Kramnik and Anand were confidently leading. The game with the current world champion was awaited with particular interest. This was a fierce battle between two powerful fighters, who proved worthy of one another. The dynamic nature of the play indicated that Magnus had recuperated, and although in the 7th round the drawing series continued – he was forced to conclude peace with the Russian champion Peter Svidler, his courage was now restored. In the next two rounds Carlsen won against Ponomarev and Leko, and finished among the tournament winners, sharing 2nd–3rd places with Ivanchuk, only half a point behind Kramnik. A worthy performance in such stellar company, confirming his status as the No.1 player from the West.

But the culmination of Carlsen's performance in Moscow was his unconditional victory in the World Blitz Championship. In a double-round tournament of 22 grandmasters Magnus scored 31 points, finishing 3 points ahead of Anand and 6 ahead of the third-placed Karjakin.

Game 56

M. Carlsen – V. Anand

Mikhail Tal Memorial Tournament
Moscow 2009

Queen's Gambit [D39]

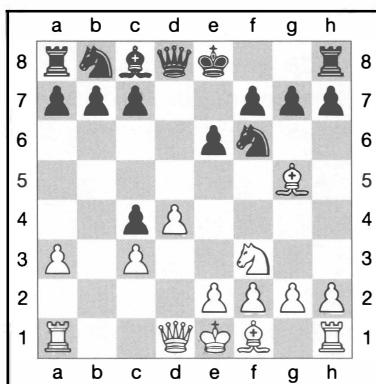
1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♘f3 d5 4. ♘c3
dxc4

The acceptance of the pawn sacrifice is currently topical not only in the Catalan Opening, but also in the Queen's Gambit, for example in the Botvinnik Variation or the Moscow Variation. But for the moment Black is on course for the Vienna Variation.

5. ♗g5 ♗b4 6. a3

Carlsen avoids the Vienna Variation, to which 6. e4 would have led, demonstrating his readiness to sacrifice a pawn.

6... ♗xc3+ 7. bxc3



7...h6

Black clarifies the opponent's intentions and allows the regaining of the pawn. 7... b5 8. a4 c6 is more critical. The game Grischuk–van Wely (Wijk aan Zee 2005) continued 9. g3 h6 10. ♗xf6 (10. ♗c1 also deserves consideration, retaining the bishops with the idea of exploiting the weak dark squares on the a3–f8 diagonal) 10...



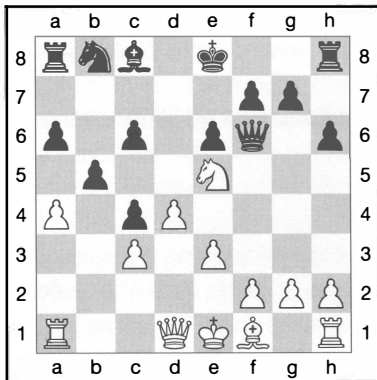
gxf6 (after 10... ♖xf6 11. ♕g2 ♖b7 12. ♘e5 it is not easy for Black to complete his development) 11. ♕g2 ♖b7 12. ♖b1 a6 13. ♘d2 ♗c7 (♘xc4 was threatened) 14. 0–0 ♘d7 15. ♖b4 c5 16. dxc5 ♕xg2 17. ♖xg2 ♗c6+ 18. ♖g1 ♖e7 and Black maintained the balance.

Instead of 15. ♖b4 White can consider the preparatory exchange 15. axb5 axb5 (or 15...cxb5 16. ♕xb7 ♖xb7 17. ♘xc4) 16. ♖xa8+ ♕xa8, and now 17. ♖b4 with the better game in view of the threats of ♘e4 and ♖a1. For example: 17...f5 18. ♖a1 ♖b7 19. e4 c5 20. ♖xb5 cxd4 21. cxd4 (21. ♘xc4 0–0 22. ♖a7 is also good) 21...c3 22. ♖c1!

8. ♕xf6 ♗xf6 9. e3

Magnus did not sacrifice the pawn in order to regain it: 9. ♖a4+ ♕d7 10. ♗xc4, since after 10...♕c6 11. e3 ♘d7 Black successfully completes his development.

9...b5 10. a4 c6 11. ♘e5 a6



If 11...0–0 there could have followed 12. ♕e2 ♖b7 13. ♖b1 (an ‘X-ray’ of the queen on the b7-bishop, typical of this type of pawn structure) 13...a6 14. ♘xc4, regaining the pawn in a favourable situation. The fianchetto of the bishop is also

possible – 12. g3 ♖b7 13. ♕g2, or, as in the game, 12. g4!? ♖b7 13. ♕g2.

12. g4!?

A fresh idea, combining the fianchetto with the idea of an offensive on the kingside – an indirect indication of Carlsen’s recovery.

12...♖b7 13. ♕g2 ♗e7

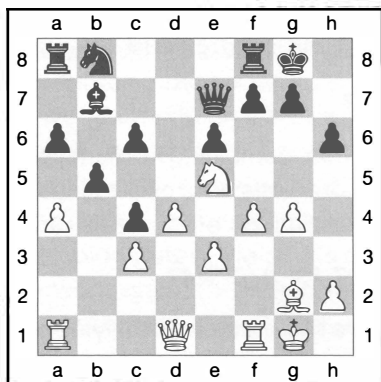
There are two methods of playing as Black with this queenside pawn structure: he can do his utmost to hold on to the pawn, displaying his readiness to withstand an attack by White on the queenside (in the Catalan Opening this course is successfully adhered to by Evgeny Sveshnikov), or at an appropriate moment he can return the pawn for the sake of completing his development. Anand prefers the former course, demonstrating his intention of fighting for a win (by no means the last consideration here was Carlsen’s physical exhaustion), whereas he could have demonstrated his peaceful intentions and returned the pawn with 13...♘d7!?, provoking simplification:

14. ♕xc6 ♕xc6 15. ♘xc6 0–0 16. 0–0, and now after 16...♘b6 or 16...e5 the g4-pawn looks out of place. It is hard to believe in the reality of an attack with such limited reserves;
14. axb5 axb5 15. ♖xa8+ ♕xa8 16. ♖a1 ♗d8 17. ♘xc6 ♗c8, and all that remains for White is to force a draw by repetition – 18. ♘a7 ♖b8 19. ♘c6 ♗c8 (variations by Shipov).

14. 0–0 0–0 15. f4

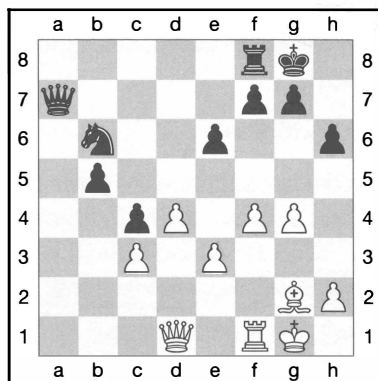
(see next diagram)

White has seized the initiative, and with the ‘hook’ on h6 the attacking pair g4/f4



threats to his king, and now he relieves the pawn tension on the queenside, hoping to exploit the a-file. 19...b4 also came into consideration, not only getting rid of the potentially weak b5-pawn (after the exchange 20. axb5 axb5 it is very vulnerable), but also creating a passed c-pawn. If 20. ♖e2 there can follow 20...♞c8 21. cxb4 ♜xb4, not fearing 22. g5 hxg5 23. fxg5 c3, when the c3-pawn diverts White from the attack on the king.

20. axb5 axb5 21. ♞a7 ♜xa7



22. ♜a1

White switches his attention to the queenside.

22...♜e7

Logical. Only by keeping the queens on can Black hope to get at White's weaknesses. After the exchange 22...♜xa1 23. ♞xa1 ♞a4 24. ♞a3! ♞c8 25. ♞f2 White retains a small but enduring advantage in the endgame. Carlsen plays such endings with great pleasure, and therefore such a turn of events could not satisfy Anand.

23. e4

Time will not wait. After the inclusion of his

looks far more active than Black's rigid pawn construction on the queenside. This is where the idea of the move 12. g4!? is revealed.

15...♞d7

Anand becomes aware of the reality of White's attack and he returns the pawn, exchanging the active knight. In the event of the preparatory 15...♜c7 he would have to reckon with 16. g5! with dangerous threats, for example: 16...hxg5 17. ♜h5 ♞d7 (17...g4 18. f5 exf5 19. ♞xf5) 18. ♞xd7 ♜xd7 19. fxg5 with the threat of switching the rook onto the h-file.

16. ♞xc6 ♜d6

16...♞xc6 is weaker: 17. ♞xc6 ♞ab8 18. axb5 axb5 19. ♞a7 ♞fd8 20. ♜f3 b4 (20...♜d6? 21. g5) 21. ♞c1 with the initiative for White.

17. ♞e7+

Understandably, a player with classical convictions rejects moving into a pin by 17. ♜f3, with unclear consequences after 17...♞h8.

17...♜xe7 18. ♞xb7 ♞a7 19. ♞g2 ♞b6

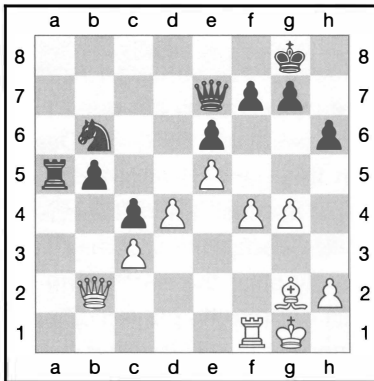
Black has succeeded in neutralising the



rook Black can set up a passed pawn on the queenside, and White forestalls this with the threat of an attack on the king.

23...♖a8 24. ♜b2 ♖a5 25. e5!

Showing an excellent feeling for the dynamics of the position! White includes his bishop in the play and intends to continue the advance of his pawn phalanx by f4–f5.



25...♜h4

By launching a counterattack, disclosing the drawbacks of g2–g4, which has led to a weakening of the king's defences, Anand demonstrates his readiness to play for a win. However, he is taking a risk. At a press-conference after the game he mentioned in passing that 25...♖d5 would have guaranteed an easy draw. A straightforward analysis enables us to ascertain that the world champion's assessment was correct: 26. f5 (26. ♗xd5 exd5 27. f5 ♜g5) 26...♖e3 27. ♖f3 ♖xg2 28. ♗xg2 ♜g5!? (28...♜h4 29. h3 h5 30. ♜f2 leads to more critical play) 29. h3 exf5 30. ♖xf5 ♜e3, and the queen penetrates into the opponent's rear, forcing White to concern himself with his own king.

26. ♜e2

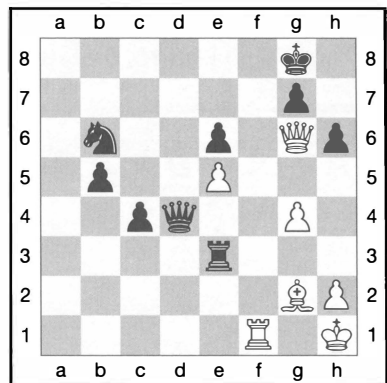
This careful move gives Black an important tempo for including his rook in the counterattack, whereas the resolute 26. f5! would have forced him to switch to defence. If 26...♜xg4 there is the unpleasant 27. h3 ♜g5 (27...♜g3 leads to similar play) 28. fxex6 fxe6 29. ♜b4! ♖a7 30. ♜d6 ♖a2 31. ♜xe6+ ♖h7 32. ♜g4 ♜xg4 33. hxxg4 and the passed e-pawn is very dangerous.

26...♖a3! 27. f5!

It would be fatal to switch to defence. After 27. ♖c1 or 27. ♖b1 there follows 27...♖a4.

27...♖xc3 28. fxe6 fxe6 29. ♜e4! ♜d8! 30. ♜g6 ♜xd4+ 31. ♖h1 ♖e3!

Attack and defence are at the highest level.



32. ♜xe6+

Carlsen forces a draw in a situation where there was a last possibility of testing the solidity of Black's position by 32. ♗c6!, with the threat of 33. ♖f8+ ♗xf8 34. ♜e8 mate, which Anand mentioned in the press conference. Black has to find the only defence 32...♜c5!. He loses after 32...♜d8 33. g5 hxxg5 34. ♜f7+ ♖h8 35. ♜h5+ ♖g8



36. ♔e8, renewing the threat of 37. ♖f8+. But after Black 32...♙c5! Black holds on by a fine thread of only moves: 33. ♗×e6+ ♕h7! (33...♕h8? 34. ♗e8+ ♕h7 35. g5 hxg5 loses to 36. ♖d1! with the threat of 37. ♗h5+ ♕g8 38. ♖d8+) 34. g5 hxg5 35. ♔e4+ ♖xe4 36. ♗f5+ ♕g8 37. ♗xe4 ♗d5! 38. ♗xd5 ♕xd5 39. ♖d1 with a draw.

**32...♕h7 33. ♗f5+ ♕h8 34. ♗f8+ ♕h7
35. ♗f5+ ♕h8 36. ♗f8+**

Draw.

Game 57

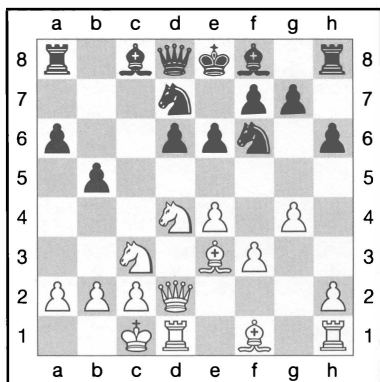
M. Carlsen – R. Ponomarev

Mikhail Tal Memorial Tournament

Moscow 2009

Sicilian Defence [B90]

**1. e4 c5 2. ♖f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♕xd4
♕f6 5. ♕c3 a6 6. ♔e3 e6 7. f3 b5
8. ♗d2 ♕bd7 9. g4 h6 10. 0-0-0**



10...♕e5

In a number of recent games the more resolute move 10...b4 has occurred, with good results for Black. Here are some examples:

a) 11. ♕a4 ♕e5 12. b3 ♔d7 13. ♕b2 d5
14. ♔f4 ♗c7 15. ♕d3 ♕xd3+ 16. ♔xd3

♗b6 17. ♕e2 dxe4 18. ♔xe4 ♖d8 with excellent play for Black (Leko–Ivanchuk, Mukachevo 2007);

b) 11. ♕ce2 ♗c7 12. h4 d5 13. ♕f4 e5 14. ♕fe6 fxe6 15. ♕xe6 ♗a5 16. exd5 ♗xa2 17. ♗d3 ♕f7 18. g5 ♕xd5 19. ♔h3 ♕xe3 20. ♕d8+ ♕e7 21. ♕c6+ ♕f7 22. g6+ ♕g8 23. ♗xe3 with very complicated play (Morozevich–Vachier-Lagrave, Biel 2009).

11. ♗e1!

A new idea in this variation After ...b5–b4 White moves away his queen in good time in the event of ...♕e5–c4. Despite his failure in this game, Ponomarev did not change his assessment of 10...♕e5 at the World Blitz Championship, which was held immediately after the end of the tournament. His opponents played differently.

The modest 11. a3 was tried in the game Dominguez–Ponomarev, which continued 11...♕fd7 12. ♗f2 ♗c7 13. ♖g1 g5 14. h4 ♖g8 15. ♕b1 ♖b8 16. ♕a2 ♔e7 17. ♖h1 ♕b6 18. ♕b4 ♕bc4 19. ♔xc4 bxc4 20. hxg5 hxg5 21. ♔d2 a5 22. ♕a2 c3! 23. ♔xc3 ♕c4 with complicated play.

But in his game with Ponomarev, Morozevich made a reckless pawn sacrifice: 11. f4!? ♕exg4 12. e5 b4 13. exf6 bxc3 14. ♗xc3 ♕xf6 (14...gxg6 suggests itself) 15. ♔g2 ♔d7 (15...d5 16. f5 would have allowed White scope for an attack) 16. ♔xa8 ♗xa8 17. ♖hg1 ♕e4 18. ♗a5 g6 19. ♕e2! ♔g7 20. ♔d4, and White gained the advantage.

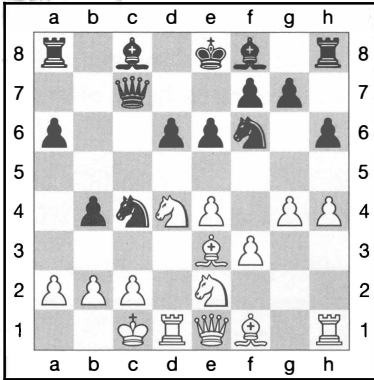
11...♗c7 12. h4 b4?!

Premature, apparently. The more natural 12...♔b7 13. ♔e2 ♕c4 14. ♔xc4 ♗xc4 15. g5 ♕d7 16. g6 ♕e5 would have led to an unclear position with chances for both sides.



13. ♖ce2 ♖c4

13...d5!? comes into consideration.



14. ♖f4!

An amazingly bold move, since all the double attacks associated with ...e6–e5 had to be calculated.

14...♖xe3

In the event of 14...e5 15. ♖d5 ♖xd5 16. exd5 exd4 17. ♖xd4+ ♖e5 18. f4 Black faces difficulties.

15. ♖xe3 ♖b6?

The primary cause of Black's later problems. He allows the development of the bishop on c4, after which the concentrated pressure on e6 may become unbearable. 15...e5?! would have been a mistake in view of 16. ♖d5 ♖xd5 17. exd5 ♖b7 18. f4! with a dangerous position for Black. He should have completed his development with 15...♖e7.

16. ♖c4!

In the style of Bobby Fischer, who so liked to attack the e6-point!

16...♖c5?!

The ...♖c7–b6–c5 manoeuvre is unsuc-

cessful. It was better to transfer the knight to c5 – 16...♖d7, not fearing 17. ♖fxe6 fxe6 18. ♖xe6, after which 18...♖c5 (or immediately 18...♖b7) 19. ♖d5 ♖b7 is possible.

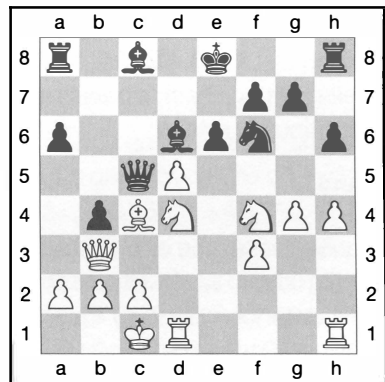
17. ♖b3!

White has focused his attention on the e6-pawn: the threat of a piece sacrifice becomes real.

17...d5

The opening of the position merely aggravates Black's problems: his king has been caught in the centre and presents an easy target for White's mobilised pieces. The only way to hold the position was by 17...♖e5.

18. exd5 ♖d6

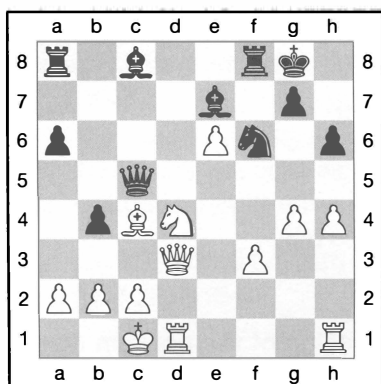


19. ♖fxe6

The fruit was ripe, but 19. ♖dxe6! looked stronger and more natural. Magnus occasionally makes little 'slips' in the conversion of an advantage.

19...fxe6 20. dxe6 ♖e7 21. ♖d3!

The queen has performed its role on b3, and now it moves closer to the opponent's king.

**21...0-0****22. ♖b3**

White wants to win in comfort: move in to g6 with his queen followed by ♜f5. But, strangely enough, even with such a concentration of force a delay in the attack allows a respite. There was a quick win by 22. g5! ♜e8 23. g×h6 ♖b7 24. h×g7, completely eliminating Black's pawn defences with a continuing attack.

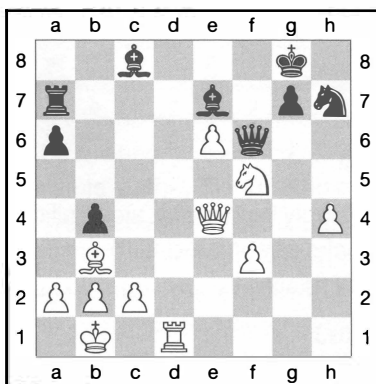
22...♞d8?

Ponomarev misses the only chance to fight on with 22...♖b7, when Black somehow sets up a defence: 23. ♜g6 ♜e8 24. ♜f5 ♞f6 or 23. g5 ♜h5 24. g×h6 ♜f4. Now his game goes downhill.

23. g5 ♜h7

Of course, 23...♞d4 24. ♜×d4 ♜×d4 25. ♞×d4 ♜e8 26. g×h6 would have enabled Black to avoid a mating attack, but there was no serious hope of saving the game.

24. g×h6 ♜h5 25. ♜e4 ♜×h6+ 26. ♜b1 ♞a7 27. ♜f5 ♞×d1+ 28. ♞×d1 ♜f6

**29. ♞d7!**

In conclusion, a little combination in the style of Capablanca, which decides the game. The 'crude' 29. ♞d8+ would have led only to the win of the bishop.

29...♖×d7 30. e×d7+ ♜f8 31. ♜d5

Black resigned.

The last tournament of 2009 was the London Chess Classic with the participation of eight grandmasters (FIDE category 18). The field was selected in accordance with English traditions with respect to their compatriots. The four strongest English players were granted the opportunity to cross swords with the main challengers for the world crown, Vladimir Kramnik and Magnus Carlsen. The favourites were drawn together in the very first round, and Carlsen's win over the ex-world champion determined the further course of the tournament. He confidently converted his lead into victory in the tournament (5 points out of 7), allowing his rival to close only within half a point.



In his game with Kramnik, Magnus was able to demonstrate those attributes of his, in which he is superior to the strongest players in the world – an ability to conduct lengthy play, balancing on the barely discernible boundary separating a minimal advantage from equality. Here it is normally the opponent who makes the first mistake.

Game 58

M. Carlsen – V. Kramnik

London 2009

English Opening [A29]

1. c4

For Carlsen, games with Kramnik have a special implication. Despite the fact that in his interviews he does not demonstrate any interest in the fight for the chess crown, Magnus regards the play of the 14th world champion as a kind of beacon, by which he should be guided. Since for the present he is inferior to the ex-champion as regards the scale of his home laboratory, this attempt to avoid surprises with the help of the English Opening, which he rarely plays, is fully justified. It should be mentioned that Carlsen also used a similar idea in his game with Topalov in Linares 2008.

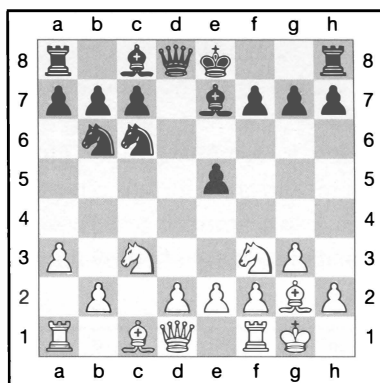
1...e5 2. ♖c3 ♜f6 3. ♜f3 ♜c6 4. g3

In the game with Topalov, Magnus played 4. d3, provoking his opponent into a reversed Sicilian. He adopts the same tactics in the present game.

4...d5 5. cxd5 ♜xd5 6. ♖g2 ♜b6 7. 0-0 ♖e7 8. a3

(see next diagram)

White prepares a pawn offensive on the queenside. 8. d3 0-0 9. a3 leads to an insignificant transposition of moves.



8...0-0

8...♖e6 is also possible, since if 9. b4 White has to reckon with 9...♜d4 with the threat of 10...♖b3, and after 10. ♖b1 f6 11. e3 (nothing is given by 11. ♜xd4 exd4 12. ♜e4 ♖d5 13. ♖b2 f5) 11...♜xf3+ 12. ♖xf3 c6 13. b5 ♖c8 Black has good play.

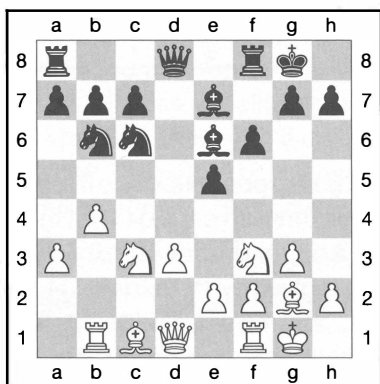
White's flank attack can be prevented by 8...a5 9. d3 0-0 10. ♖e3 ♖e6. This variation occurred in the famous game Botvinnik–Portisch (Monte Carlo 1968), where the 6th world champion carried out a combination in which he twice sacrificed the exchange: 11. ♜a4 ♜xa4 12. ♖xa4 ♖d5 13. ♖fc1 ♖e8 14. ♖c2 ♖f8 15. ♖ac1 ♜b8? (15...♖d7 is correct; the hope of playing ... c7–c6 is illusory) 16. ♖xc7! ♖c6 17. ♖1xc6! bxc6 18. ♖xf7! and White won. Nowadays 11. ♜d2 is preferred, but here too after 11...♜d5 12. ♜xd5 ♖xd5 13. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 14. ♖c1 f5 Black has adequate counterplay (Cvetkovic–Mikhalchishin, Yugoslavia 1993).

**9. b4 ♖e6 10. ♜b1**

10. b5 is premature, as after 10...♟d4 White cannot play 11. ♟xe5? because of 11...♙b3.

10...f6 11. d3

A well-known position in the English Opening: White has deployed his forces as in the Dragon Variation of the Sicilian Defence. This type of 'reversed' play has a certain implication. In dynamic Dragon structures an extra tempo is important, and Carlsen, who has a fair amount of experience in such positions, is satisfied by such a turn of events.

**11...a5**

Before placing his knights on the central squares d4 and d5, Black aims to determine the pawn structure on the queenside and obtain an outpost for his pieces at b3, but after White's obvious reply he has problems with his other queenside pawns. It looks more promising to pursue central strategy with 11...♟d4, which Carlsen encountered in his game with Radjabov at the 2008 Grand Prix tournament in Baku. There followed 12. ♟d2 c6 13. e3 (13. ♟de4 ♟d5) 13...♙b5!? (with the idea after 14. ♟xb5

cxb5 15. ♟b3 ♟a4 of attacking the weaknesses on the queenside) 14. ♜c2 ♟xc3 15. ♜xc3 ♜d7 with a good game for Black in view of his pressure on the d3-pawn.

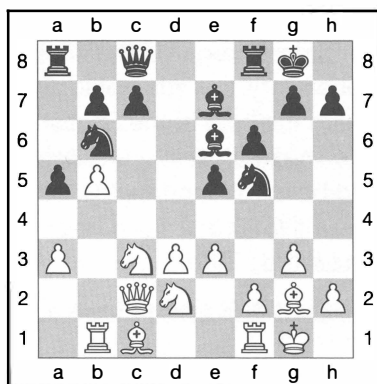
It remains to add that after 12. ♙e3 ♟xf3+ 13. ♙xf3 c6 followed by ...♟d5 Black also has roughly equal chances.

12. b5 ♟d4 13. ♟d2

After the exchange of knights White's c3-square would have been weak.

13...♜c8

The main continuation is considered to be 13...♙d5 (not 13...♟d5? 14. ♙xd5 ♙xd5 15. e3, when Black loses a piece) 14. ♟xd5 ♟xd5. The centralised knights ensure Black a good game.

14. e3 ♟f5 15. ♜c2

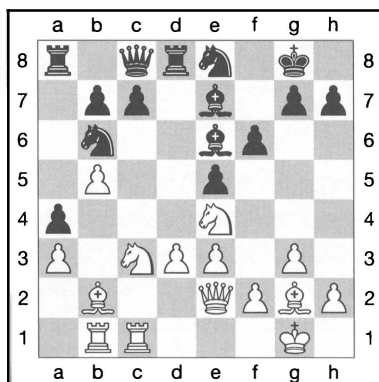
The price of driving away the knight is a weakening of the d3-pawn, which has to be defended. The alternative is 15. ♜e2 with the idea of attacking Black's centre by f2–f4, but in this case the problems with the defence of the d3-pawn are not relieved. For example, the game Sargissian–Yakovich (Moscow 2009) continued 15...♟d6 16. ♟de4 ♟f7 17. ♜d1 ♙g4 18. f3 ♙e6 19. d4, and here instead of routine play



against an 'isolani' – 19...exd4 20. exd4 ♖e8, which in general is not bad, 19...♗d8!? came into consideration, with the idea of 20. ♖c5 ♗c4 21. ♗e1 ♖d5, controlling the central squares.

In Bareev–Shirov (Poikovsky 2006) White preferred 16. a4, but this weakens the b4-square, which expands the possibilities of the black bishops. The game continued 16...♗g4 (16...♗d8 is also good, intending to answer 17. ♗a3 with 17...♖e4!?, gaining the advantage of the two bishops) 17. f3 ♗e6 18. f4 ♖f7 19. ♖b3 ♗b4! 20. ♗c2 (the queen's journey to e2 has proved fruitless) 20...♗h3 with excellent play for Black.

able post, not only removing the threat of an attack by the bishop, but also preparing f2–f4.



19...♗f8

The resulting position can be assessed as one of dynamic equilibrium, which is not easy to unbalance. By making this waiting move, Kramnik invites his opponent to do this. More active play for Black could have been associated with the preparation of ...f6–f5 – the pivotal idea of the given variation. In this respect, consideration should have been given to 19...♗h3 20. ♗h1 (if 20. ♗f3, then 20...♗e6 is appropriate, emphasising that White's hopes associated with f2–f4 are illusory) 20...f5 21. ♖d2 ♗g4 22. ♗f1 (if 22. ♖f3, then 22...♗e6 with the threat of ...e5–e4 is good) 22...e4 23. f3 exf3 24. ♖xf3 ♗e6, keeping White's so-called 'little pawn centre' under control.

20. f4

There is no other active possibility. The attempt first to regroup the rooks encounters a refutation, for example: 20. ♖d1 (with the idea of d3–d4) 20...♗g4 21. f3 ♗e6 22. d4 ♗b3 or 20. ♖f1 ♗d7 21. ♖bd1 ♗b3 22. ♖d2 f5.

15...♗d8 16. ♗b2 a4

Black prepares the surrounding of the b5-pawn and takes control of the b3-square, restricting the manoeuvrability of the white knights. The drawback to this move is that the a4-pawn may become a target, as in fact happened in the game.

17. ♖fc1

A logical move; intensifying the pressure on the c-file is in the spirit of the position, and White is intending to transfer his knight to c5. After the routine 17. ♖fd1 ♖d6 both white knights are 'hobbled' by the need to defend the b5-pawn and the b3-square.

17...♖d6 18. ♖de4 ♖e8

Black not only prevents ♖e4–c5, but also defends the c7-pawn, not ruling out the possibility of returning to the attack on the b5-pawn.

19. ♗e2!

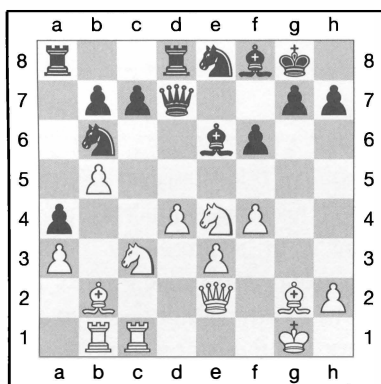
A concrete approach to the position. Magnus transfers his queen to a more comfort-

**20...exf4**

An essentially forced exchange, conceding ground in the centre: Black does not want to allow the isolation of his e-pawn and the opening of the f-file for the white rook.

21. gx f4 ♖d7 22. d4

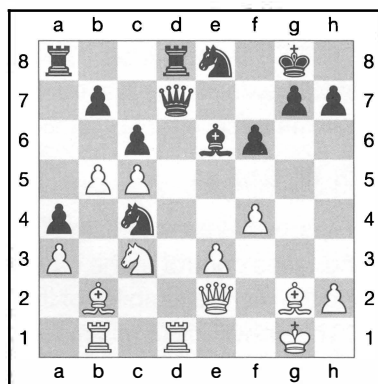
Persisting with the ♖e4–c5 manoeuvre, exchanging the dark-square bishop. The passive 22. ♖d1 is met by 22...♗b3 23. ♖d2 f5! 24. ♖g5 ♖d6 with excellent play.

**22...c6**

'This was more or less the only move I considered, as I thought that Black had to do something to prevent b7 from collapsing completely,' Carlsen comments. '22...♗c4!? 23. ♖f2 ♗d3 was actually quite good, but Kramnik may have decided that there was no reason to start concrete play, since 24. ♖c5! looked strong during the game. Still, Black is probably fine here after 24...♗xc5 25. dxc5 ♖c4! (25...♗xb1 26. ♖xb1 gives White excellent compensation for the exchange, as Black cannot play 26...♖c4, due to 27. ♗d5+) 26. ♗xb7 ♖g4+ 27. ♖g2 ♖xg2+ 28. ♗xg2 ♖ab8.'

23. ♖c5 ♗xc5 24. dxc5 ♖c4

By lifting his control of the a4-pawn, Black embarks on a forceful tactical path, which complicates the defence. The natural 24...♖d5 suggests itself: 25. ♖xd5 (25. bxc6 bxc6 26. ♖xd5 leads to a similar position) 25...♗xd5 26. e4 ♖e7 27. bxc6 bxc6 28. ♗f3 ♗b3, and by controlling the d-file Black holds the position without any particular difficulty.

25. ♖d1**25...♖c7 26. ♗c1 ♖a5**

The consequence of the incautious 24...♖c4. Since Black has to reckon with the exchanges on c6 and d8 with the loss of a pawn, he is forced to return his knight, defending the more valuable of the pawns. With the loss of the a4-pawn the conversion of the passed pawn is too distant and Black has time to activate his pieces. 26...cxb5? did not work in view of 27. ♖xb5 ♖a5 28. ♖d5 ♖f7 29. ♖b6, when a pawn is nevertheless lost, and the rook remains out of play.

27. bxc6 bxc6 28. ♖xa4

'I was very happy to discover that this move does not lose any material, even though it looks a bit loose. 28. ♖b4 was another move I considered, but I did not



like 28...♖b3 (28...♙b3 29. ♖x d8 ♖x d8 30. ♙f1, and a4 falls without any real compensation) 29. ♖x a4 ♖x c1 30. ♖x c1 f5, when Black has some counterplay. However, White is probably still a bit better, and I should probably have gone for this.' (Carlsen)

28...♖xd1+

The alternative 28... ♖b3 29. ♗x d8 ♗x d8 30. ♗b6 (if 30. ♗c3, then 30... ♗e7 31. ♗xc6 ♗c4! 32. ♗g2 ♗d3 and ... ♗xc5 is possible) 30... ♗d1+ 31. ♗f2 ♗e7 32. ♗xb3 ♗xc1 33. ♗d3 would have led to simplification, but allowed White to activate his rook.

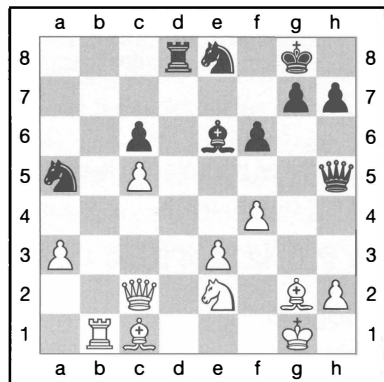
29. ♔xd1 ♖d8 30. ♔c2 ♜f7 31. ♞c3

By bringing up his knight to the centre of events, White not only prevents the rook invasion at d1, but also coordinates his forces. In time-trouble one could hardly expect time to decide on 31. ♖b6. After 31...♙b3!? (if 31...♖b3, then 32. e4 ♖d4 33. ♖f2 followed by ♙e3 is possible) 32. ♖c3 ♗d1+ 33. ♖f2 ♖h5 34. ♗xh3 ♖xh3 35. ♖xh3 ♖f8 White would have gained a material advantage. However, his forces are uncoordinated, and it is only possible to defend the bishop by 36. ♖c4 or 36. ♖c2 (36. ♙b2? loses to 36...♗d2+), but then there follows 36...♖h4+, when Black picks up the h2-pawn, not leaving the king in peace.

31...♔h5?!

An impulsive move, which significantly complicates the defence, whereas the bishop manoeuvre 31...♟b3 (which Black must undoubtedly have considered) 32. ♖e4 ♙c4 would have enabled him to hold the position. For example, in the event of 33. ♟b6 ♖f8 Black regains the c5-pawn, since 34. ♖f5 ♟d3 35. ♟b2 ♟xe3 is not good for White.

32. e2



32...♖f5?

‘Perhaps his only real mistake in this game. He could have retained dynamic equality with the amazing 32...♙f8!!, with the idea of 33...♗b3,’ comments Carlsen. ‘The point, which we probably both missed, is that White cannot play 33. ♖d4 because of 33...♗x4 34. exd4 ♕f5, and Black is at least not worse, as 35. ♗e4 fails to 35...♞g6+ 36. ♞g2 ♞xg2+!. 32...♗g4 33. ♖g3 ♗d1+ 34. ♞x4d1 is probably why he decided to play 32...♕f5.’ However, it should be mentioned that to find the saving computer move 32...♙f8!! in time-trouble is practically impossible. But the move in the game is also hard to explain, since after the opponent’s obvious reply Black’s position is untenable.

33. e4 ♖g4 34. ♘g3 ♔f7 35. ♖f1!

In finishing off the opponent, Magus, as always, is accurate. First a technical procedure, shutting the knight out of the game.

35...♗e6 36. ♔c3!

And now the rook is driven into the corner.

36...♖a8

Otherwise the knight cannot be saved. If 36...♖c4 (b7) there would have followed 37. f5.



37. ♖b4 ♜d7 38. f5 ♙f7 39. ♙f4 ♜d1
40. ♜f2

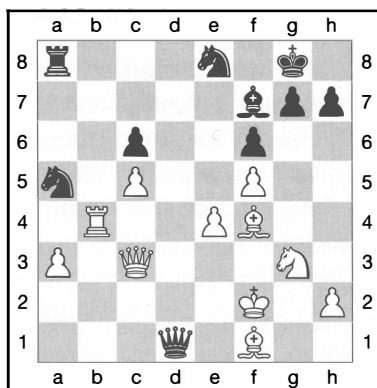
(see next diagram)

40...♗b3?

Now Black loses his knight. He should have brought his queen back.

41. ♙e2 ♜b1 42. ♙c4 ♖xa3 43. ♗e2

Black resigned.



Carlsen began the year 2010 as the clear rating favourite, now established at the 2810 mark, and after the positive end to the previous year, few doubted his ambitions at the super-tournament in Wijk aan Zee (FIDE category 19). And that is what happened. For the first time Magnus won the first prize (if you don't count the share of 1st–2nd places in 2008, where on the tie-break the prize was awarded to Aronian). And the fact that he did this in competition with the strongest players in the world, including the last two champions Kramnik and Anand, consolidated his status as a real contender for the world championship. But in quality of play it was as yet premature to talk about Carlsen's total superiority. Especially painful was his loss to Kramnik, the only player whom he had both beaten and lost to in 2009. However, his ability to play with full concentration was something that not all his famous opponents could withstand.

Game 59

S. Karjakin – M. Carlsen

Wijk aan Zee 2010

French Defence [C11]

For Carlsen, games with Karjakin have a particular implication. Since their childhood years the chess paths of the two prodigies have taken the course of a secret rivalry, and they first crossed here in Wijk aan Zee, where Karjakin was the first to break through to the A tournament and the first to win the main prize. This had occurred in the previous year in the presence of Carlsen, who by that time had confidently overtaken Karjakin in the rating list. How-

ever, in individual meetings in 'classical' chess, neither had won – five draws. In the 10th round of the current 'Wijk' the two players arrived with the same number of points, but different moods: the previous day Carlsen had lost with White to Kramnik, whereas Karjakin had won with Black against Nakamura.

1. e4 e6

Undoubtedly a surprise for Karjakin – apparently for the first time, Carlsen plays the French Defence. But here is his motivation: 'In my younger years I used to consider it at best a second-rate opening. I believe that 1...c5 and 1...e5! are better choices, but since I desperately wanted to win this

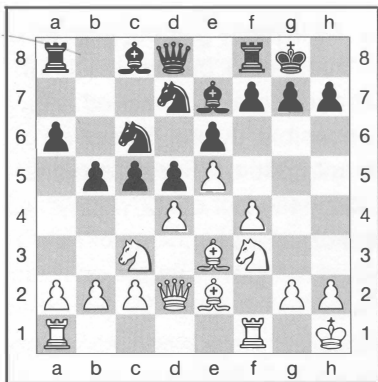


game (I was trailing the leaders Kramnik and Shirov by a point at this stage) I decided to try something new.' It can be assumed that Carlsen was following the path of Rodriguez Vila, who at the 2009 World Cup in Khanty-Mansiysk used the French Defence to try and save his mini-match against Karjakin, and drew appropriate conclusions from this experience.

2. d4 d5 3. ♖c3 ♖f6 4. e5 ♖fd7 5. f4 c5 6. ♖f3 ♖c6 7. ♗e3 ♗e7

In recent times this move has often been employed by one of the last Mohicans of the French Defence, Mikhail Gurevich. The classical continuation is 7...cxd4 followed by ...♗b6.

8. ♗d2 0–0 9. ♗e2 a6 10. 0–0 b5 11. ♖h1



Karjakin decides not to continue with the standard 11. a3 and he diverges onto a little-studied path, although in the aforementioned game with Rodriguez Vila he was able to build up a very dangerous attack on the king: 11...♗b6 12. ♖d1 a5 13. c3 a4 14. ♖f2 ♖a5 15. ♖ad1 ♗b7 16. ♗d3 ♖c4 17. ♗e2 ♖xe3 18. ♗xe3 b4 19. f5 ♗a6 20. f6 gxh6 21. ♗h6 f5 22. dxc5 ♗xc5 23. axb4 ♗b6 24. ♖h1 f6 25. g4 ♗xd3 26. ♖xd3 fxg4 27. ♖g1 f5 28. h3 ♖f7 29. hxg4 f4!. And although White's attack

sufficed only for a draw, the competitive objective of qualifying for the second round of the World Cup was fulfilled.

The waiting move 11. ♖h1 retains the option of ♖a4 if Black carries out the plan of ...b5–b4, ...a6–a5 and ...♗c8–a6, although moving the knight to the edge of the board has its drawbacks and demands additional justification compared with the retreat to d1.

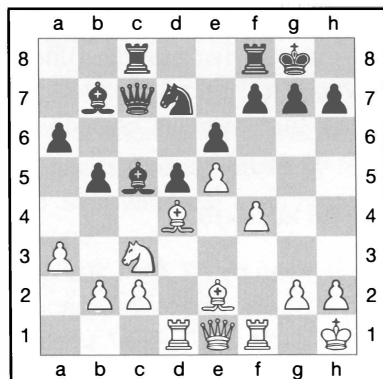
11...♗c7

Carlsen also sticks to waiting tactics, to clarify White's plans, not considering it necessary to check 11...b4 12. ♖a4. Meanwhile, the game Nijboer–M. Gurevich (Amsterdam 2006) showed that Black has quite good prospects. There followed 12...cxd4 13. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 14. ♗xd4 ♗b7 15. f5 exf5 16. ♖xf5 ♗c6 17. b3 ♗xa4 18. bxa4 ♖c5 19. ♖af1 ♖e6 20. ♗a1 a5, and it was rather White who had problems.

12. a3 ♗b7 13. ♖ad1 ♖ac8 14. ♗e1

Strictly speaking, a new, although quite logical move. White switches his queen to the kingside, but his formulation of the idea is unsuccessful. Before this the routine 14. dxc5 ♗xc5 15. ♖d4 was played.

14...cxd4 15. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 16. ♗xd4 ♗c5



**17. ♖h4?**

A surprisingly naïve move for such an erudite grandmaster. Surely White wasn't seriously hoping for an attack on the king? After all, for this he would need to have at least a pair of minor pieces aimed at the kingside. In the spirit of the position was 17. ♖f2, from where, in the event of ...f7–f6, the queen retains control over the central dark squares (in particular d4). True, the loss of time on the king move to h1 makes itself felt, and White has no grounds for gaining a real advantage. For example: 17. ♖f2 f6 18. exf6 ♖xf6!? (more interesting than 18...♟xf6 19. ♙xc5 ♖xc5 20. ♖xc5 ♖xc5 21. ♜g1, after which Black has to forget about any ambitions) and White has to reckon with the threat to his f4-pawn. For example: 19. ♙xc5 ♟xc5 20. ♖d4 ♟e4!? 21. ♟xe4 dxe4 22. c3 ♖cf8 23. g3 g5!, or 19. ♖e3 ♖cf8 20. ♜g1 ♙xd4 21. ♖xd4 ♖b6, intending a possible ...♟d7–b8–c6. Apart from 17...f6 Black can also consider 17...♟b6 18. ♙d3 (intending f4–f5, which for the moment is premature – 18. f5?! ♙xd4 19. ♖xd4 f6! 20. fxe6 fxe5) 18...♟c4 19. ♙xc4 (not 19. b3? ♟b2!) 19...♙xd4! 20. ♖xd4 ♖xc4 with an equal game.

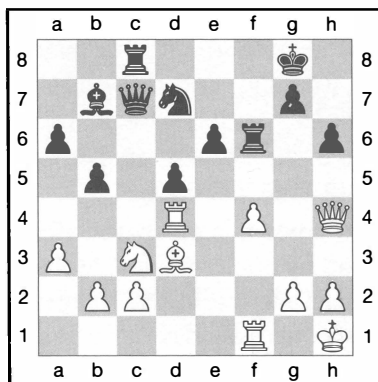
17... ♙xd4 18. ♖xd4 f6!

Of course. As is well known, in the French Defence there are two standard undermining moves: ...c7–c5 and ...f7–f6. It now transpires that there is nothing for the queen to do on h4.

19. ♙d3 h6 20. exf6

Nothing is given by 20. ♖g4 ♖b6 21. exf6 ♟xf6 22. ♖d1 e5!, when White cannot play 23. fxe5 ♖xd4 24. ♙h7+ ♟xh7, since it turns out that his back rank is weak. There only

remains 23. ♖b4 d4 24. fxe5 dxc3 25. exf6 cxb2 26. ♖xb2 ♖xf6 with the better game for Black.

20... ♖xf6

The simplest, since it becomes clear that White's play has come to a standstill. The rook on d4 is badly placed, and not only is ...♖cf8 threatened, but he also has to reckon with the threat of ...e6–e5. 20...♟xf6 is also possible, eyeing the option of playing the knight to e4. For example: 21. ♖d1 (21. ♖e1 ♟e4!?) 21...e5 22. fxe5 ♖xe5 with the idea of ...♟e4.

21. f5

The opening of the position merely increases the activity of the black pieces. But the attempt by White to consolidate his forces by 21. ♖g4 ♖cf8 22. ♖f3 does not succeed after 22...♟b8! with the threat of ...♟c6. For example: 23. ♙g6 ♙c8! 24. ♖g3 ♟c6 25. ♖d2 ♟e7 26. ♙d3 ♖xf4 and Black wins a pawn.

21... ♖cf8

Realising that White is condemned to passive defence, Black calmly increases the pressure, assuming that winning the exchange by 21...e5 22. ♟xd5 ♙xd5



23. Bxd5 Qb6 24. We4 Qxd5 25. Wxd5+ is an insufficient return for his advantage.

22. Bg1 Qc5! 23. fxe6 Qxe6 24. Bg4

After 24. Bxd5 Qf4 25. Bd4 Wc5 or 24. Qxd5 Qxd5 25. Bxd5 Qf4 26. Bd4 Wc5 White has to give up the exchange.

24... Qf4 25. Wg3



25... We7!

An accurate move. By taking control of the e2-square with the threat of ...d5–d4, Black puts his opponent in zugzwang. A characteristic variation is given by Carlsen: 26. h3 d4 27. Qd1 (27. Qe2 Qxe2 28. Qxe2 Qc8 leads to the loss of the exchange) 27... Qc8 28. Be1 Wf7 29. Bh4 Qb7 30. Bg1 Qxg2! 31. Bxg2 Bf3 32. Wg4 Be8 , and White cannot defend against ... Be1 .

26. Bxf4

White could not find anything better than to give up the exchange. But now it is merely a matter of technique.

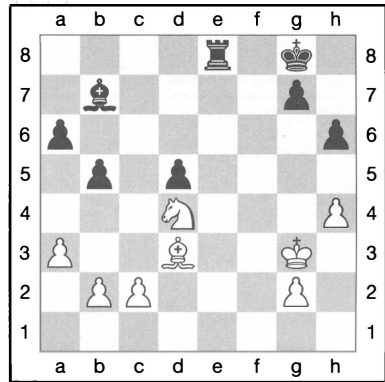
26... Bxf4 27. Qe2

27. Wg6 B8f6 28. Wh7+ Qf7 was hopeless for White.

27... Bf1 28. Qd4 Bxg1+ 29. Qxg1 Be8

Forcing the exchange of queens, after which Black can set about converting his exchange advantage without any particular problems.

30. h4 We1+ 31. Qh2 Wxg3+ 32. Qxg3



32... Qf7!

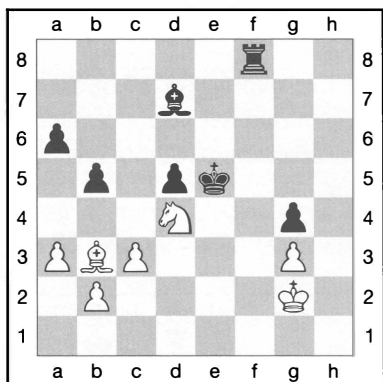
The technique of playing simple positions is a favourite 'hobby-horse' of Magnus Carlsen. He is not tempted by the win of a pawn after the invasion of the rook: 32... Be1 33. Qf4 Bb1 34. b3 Ba1 35. Qe5 Bxa3 36. Qd6 , and he prevents any activity by the white king with the support of the blockading knight on d4 – 33. Qf4 Qf6 , threatening ...g7–g5.

33. Qf2 Qf6 34. g3 Qc8 35. c3 Qg4 36. Qc2 g5 37. hxxg5+ hxxg5 38. Qb3

Against the attempt to stand firm with 38. Qd3 Black decides matters by 38... Bh8 39. Qg2 Qh5 with the switching of the bishop to g6.

38... Qe5 39. Qc2 Bf8+ 40. Qg2 Qd7 41. Qf3+ Qf6 42. Qb3 g4 43. Qd4 Qe5

(see next diagram)



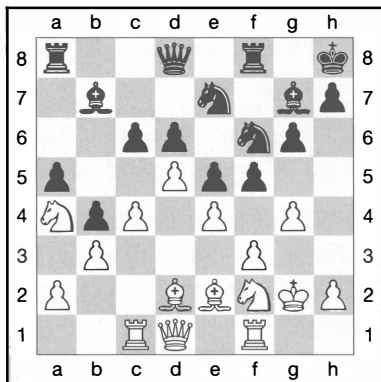
The black pieces occupy ideal positions. White is unable to prevent the advance of the b-pawn.

44. ♖c2 a5 45. ♖d1 ♜e4

White resigned.

After his victory in Wijk aan Zee the leader of the world rating list permitted himself to miss the prestigious Linares tournament and to relax in Nice at the regular Amber Tournament of Joop van Oosterom. It stands to reason that here too a complete triumph was expected of Carlsen. After all, in 2009 he had been only fourth after Aronian, Kramnik and Anand. Magnus was so sure of success, that he permitted himself to begin the tournament with the move 1. a3 in his blindfold game with Ivanchuk. In this way he so motivated the outstanding Ukrainian grandmaster, that the latter won both games and developed such a pace, that to catch him Magnus had to score seven (!) successive wins. He began with a brilliant attack, conducted blindfold.

L. Aronian – M. Carlsen Nice 2010



'This is what Aronian had missed. Once the bishop joins the attack via e5 or d4, White's days will be numbered,' Carlsen comments. The further comments also belong to him, and were published in the Russian magazine *64 Shakhmatnoe obozrenie* and also in *New in Chess*.

23. ♜xe4 ♖d4+ 24. ♜f2

'24. ♜g2 looks very dangerous, but might have been White's best chance, together with ♖g5 on the next move: a) 24...♞h4 was what I had actually intended, and it does indeed work very well after the obvious 25. ♖g5 (25. ♖f3 is the only move

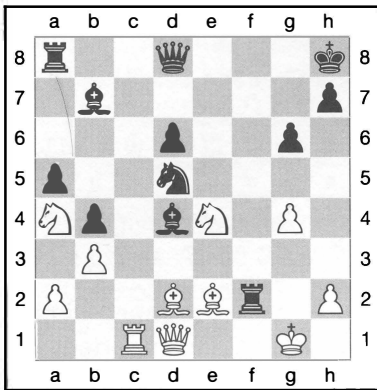
**18...fxe4! 19. fxe4 cxd5 20. exd5
♜exd5! 21. cxd5 ♜xd5 22. ♜g1 e4!**



that allows White to defend) 25...♘e3+ 26. ♙xe3 ♙xe4 27. ♙f3 ♖xg4+; b) 24...♗e7! 25. ♙f3 ♖xf3 26. ♖xf3 ♘f6 27. ♖ce1 ♙xe4 28. ♖xe4 ♘xe4, and Black is a clear pawn up, but there is still plenty of fight ahead.'

24...♖xf2

'When I played this, I believed that I was winning on the spot, but then I immediately noticed his only defence.'



25. ♘xf2?

'This move, which my opponent made instantly, loses trivially. Had he taken a bit more time, he would surely have noticed the resource 25. ♙g5!, which, surprisingly enough, keeps White in the game. I had intended to play the simple 25...♙e3. Now, after the more or less forced line 26. ♙xe3 ♖g2+ 27. ♘h1 ♘xe3 28. ♖d4+ ♘g8 29. ♖xe3 ♖xe2 30. ♖xe2 ♗e7 Black will once again emerge with an extra pawn, but not without some drawing chances for his opponent. 25...♙f6 is probably best, but lines like 26. ♘xf6 ♘e3!! 27. ♖d4 ♖g2+ 28. ♘h1 ♖xe2+ 29. ♘e4+ ♘g8 30. ♙xd8 ♖c8!! 31. ♖xe3 ♖xe3 32. ♖xc8 ♖xe4! 33. ♙xa5 ♙xc8 are not that easy to calculate blindfolded.'

**25...♗h4 26. ♖e1 ♖f8 27. ♙f3 ♖xf3
28. ♖e4 ♖xf2+**

White resigned.

Before the last round Carlsen still had real chances of sole victory in the tournament, but in his blindfold game with Grischuk he left his queen en prise. The result was a share of 1st–2nd places with Ivanchuk and an overall score of 14½ points from 22 games. The winners also made the same scores in both categories: in the blindfold they scored 6½ points (the same as Kramnik), but in the rapid they were unrivalled with 8 points.

The double-round tournament of six grandmasters in the small Romanian town of Bazna (FIDE category 20) received the prefix 'super' thanks to the participation of the leader of the world rating list Magnus Carlsen and the winner of the World Cup Boris Gelfand. And although the echo of Carlsen's victory by a margin of two moves (+5 in 10 games!) was in keeping with his victory in Nanjing, in the course of the tournament his superiority did not seem so indisputable. At a certain moment he could have been challenged by Gelfand, in the game with whom the Norwegian had to defend by finding virtually the only moves. In the first three rounds Carlsen had to be satisfied with draws, but at the critical moment he as though acquired a second wind and won four games in a row. What operated was the phenomenon of Magnus's 'Fischer style' of play, ready to fight until resources are completely exhausted, and winning apparently drawn positions. According to Gelfand: 'Carlsen has an incredibly developed "killer

instinct”: to players who are not in their best form, he gives no quarter – neither with White, nor with Black.’ The impression is such that, under the magic of his powerful play, some players, including ones with high ratings, come along to a game as though doomed beforehand.

Game 60

L.-D. Nisipeanu – M. Carlsen

Bazna 2010

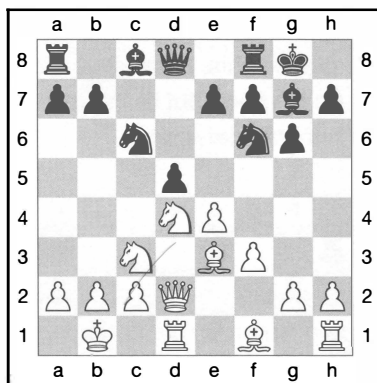
Sicilian Defence [B76]

**1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♗xd4
♜f6 5. ♗c3 g6 6. ♖e3 ♗g7 7. f3 ♗c6
8. ♚d2 0-0 9. 0-0-0**

The first ‘warning bell’, indicating the magical effect of Carlsen on his opponents. Nisipeanu is openly afraid of Magnus, and he avoids the critical move 9. ♖c4, in which the latter had gained several brilliant wins, in favour of the old continuation. After 9. 0-0-0 White need not fear Black’s counterplay after ...♗d7, ...♝c8 and ...♗c6–a5–c4, since his bishop can capture the knight on c4 not from b3 (to where it retreats after being developed at c4), but from f1, saving a whole tempo. But he has to reckon with the attack in the centre, as occurred in the game.

9...d5 10. ♗b1

The second ‘bell’: Nisipeanu avoids the main continuation 10. exd5 ♗xd5 11. ♗xc6 bxc6, where White wins a pawn in the variations 12. ♗xd5 cxd5 13. ♝xd5 and 12. ♗d4 e5 13. ♖c5 ♝e8 14. ♗xd5 cxd5 15. ♝xd5, with active counterplay for Black. The tactical justification of 10. ♗b1 is that 10...dxe4? is not possible on account of 11. ♗xc6 ♝xd2 12. ♗xe7+. But Carlsen is also prepared for this turn of events, as is indicated by his 13th move.



10...♝b8

Nisipeanu was probably aiming for 10...♗xd4 11. e5! (an important interposition) 11...♗f5 12. exf6 exf6 (12...♖xf6 13. ♗xd5 ♝xd5! 14. ♝xd5 ♗xe3 15. ♝d2 ♗xd1 16. ♝xd1 ♖e6 leads to very sharp play, where Black has compensation for the sacrificed queen) 13. ♖c5 d4 14. ♖xf8 ♝xf8, being guided by the game Short–Carlsen (London 2009), which continued 15. ♗b5 ♗e3 16. ♝c1 ♖h6 17. ♝xd4 ♗f5 18. ♝c3 ♖xc1 19. ♖xc1 ♗d7 20. ♗d3 ♝c8 21. ♝d2 ♖xb5 22. ♖xb5 ♝c5 with equal play, where he had most probably prepared a surprise.

But in the Dragon it has already been established that 10...♝b8 is a useful move (an indication being the emergence of the ‘Chinese Dragon’ in the variation 9. ♖c4 ♗d7 10. 0-0-0 ♝b8), after which it is unfavourable for White to capture ♗xc6, and at the same time he has to reckon with the threat of ...e7–e5. The tactical justification of the rook development at b8 is reinforced



by the fact that 11. ♖f4? is unfavourable, as there follows 11...e5! 12. ♖xc6 bxc6 13. ♗xe5 ♖xe4 14. ♗d4 c5! 15. ♗xe4 dxe4 16. ♗xd8 ♗xe5 17. ♗xf8+ ♖xf8 18. ♖c1 exf3 19. gxf3, and White has a strategically lost position.

11. ♖db5

The most popular move – White plays his knight to a7 with the idea of exchanging the bishop on c8. After the retreat 11. ♖b3 Black can go into an endgame – 11...dxe4 12. ♗xd8 ♗xd8 13. ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 14. ♗xa7 ♗a8 15. ♗b6 ♗f5= (L. Milov–Ovsejevitch, Nikolaev 1995).

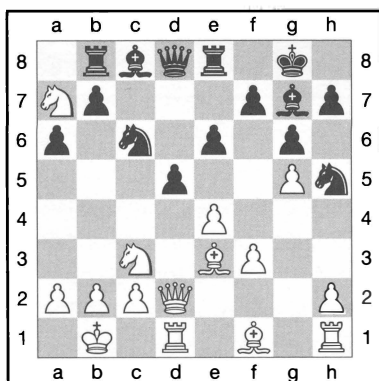
11...a6 12. ♖a7 e6 13. g4

Nothing is given by the simplifying 13. exd5 exd5 14. ♖xc8 ♗xc8 15. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 16. ♗xd5 ♗xd5 17. ♗xd5 ♖b4 18. ♗c5 (or 18. ♗d2 ♗fe8 with the idea of 19. ♗f2 ♗h6!) 18...♗ce8! 19. ♗d2 ♗d8 with equal chances (Sjugirov–Narayanan, Kirishi 2006).

13...♗e8!

Black prepares for the opening of the position after the capture on d5.

14. g5 ♖h5



Not 14...♖d7? 15. exd5 exd5 16. ♖xd5 ♖xa7 17. ♗xa7 ♗a8 18. ♗f2 with an overwhelming advantage for White.

15. ♗f2?!

The impression is that Carlsen has outwitted his opponent, and it has to be admitted that the knight raid to a7 has proved ineffective. If 15. ♖xc8 White has to reckon with 15...d4!, while in the event of 15. exd5 exd5 16. ♖xd5 ♗e6 17. c4 ♖e5 the knight cannot escape from a7, and he is forced to return the pawn by 17. ♖xc6 bxc6 18. ♖f6+, transposing into an inferior endgame. But after the move in the game White is unable to exchange his knight, which 15. ♗c5 would permit, preventing 15...♗d7? because of 16. exd5 exd5 17. ♖xd5! with the threat of 18. ♖xc6 bxc6 19. ♖e7+. Better here is 15...♗a5 16. ♗e3 with the alternative of sacrificing a pawn – 16...d4 17. ♖xc6 ♗xc5 18. ♖xd4, obtaining a powerful dark-square bishop as compensation, or going into a roughly equal endgame – 16...♗xc3 17. ♗xc3 ♗xc3 18. bxc3.

15...♗d7!

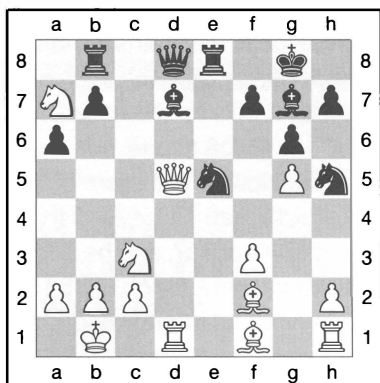
The loss of a pawn is of no significance, since the knight on a7 is not even a notorious 'Tarrasch knight', but rather a 'donkey' in a trap.

16. exd5 exd5 17. ♗xd5

After 17. ♖xd5 ♗e6! Black has more than sufficient compensation for the pawn. For example, White cannot play 18. ♖xc6? bxc6 19. ♖f6+ ♖xf6 20. gxf6 ♗xf6, when without loss of material he is unable to withstand the massed attack of the black pieces. But possibly he already had no choice other than to go 'fishing in troubled waters', by playing 18. c4 ♖e5.

**17...♖e5**

The trap has operated – the knight is out of play for ever.

**18. ♖b3?**

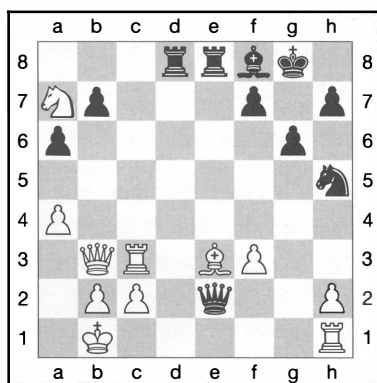
White gives up his g5-pawn, which could have been defended: 18. ♖e3 ♜e7 19. ♖e2 (or 19. f4? ♖e6 20. ♜a5 ♖g4 and White loses after 21. ♖c5 b6 22. ♖xe7 bxa5, while after 21. ♖b6 the placing of his pieces looks strange, to say the least: Black can continue either 21...♖xc3 or 21...♖f5 with the threats of ...♖xf4 and ...♖xc3) 19...♖e6 20. ♜d2 ♖bd8 (20...♖c4 21. ♖xc4 ♖xc4 22. ♖e4

♖bd8) 21. ♜c1 ♖c4, with clear and easy play for Black.

18...♜xg5 19. ♖e4 ♜f4

The outcome is decided, since Black is effectively playing with an extra piece.

20. ♖e2 ♖e6 21. ♜a3 ♖c4 22. ♖xc4 ♖xc4 23. ♖d6 ♖f8 24. ♖d4 ♜e5 25. ♖xc4 ♖xd6 26. ♜d3 ♖f8 27. a4 ♖bd8 28. ♜b3 ♜d5 29. ♖c3 ♜d2 30. ♖e3 ♜e2

**31. ♖b6?**

and White resigned, without waiting for 31...♖d1+ 32. ♖xd1 ♜xd1+ 33. ♖a2 ♖e1.

In the following game it was a top-class player who fell under the magic of Carlsen's infallibility. After obtaining an almost winning position, at a critical moment Ruslan Ponomarev took Carlsen 'at his word', was frightened by some illusory threats, and in the end he lost.



Game 61

R. Ponomariov – M. Carlsen

Bazna 2010

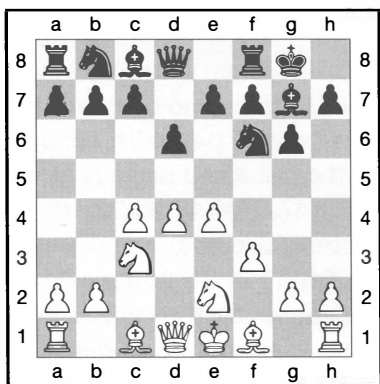
King's Indian Defence [E81]

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♙c3 ♙g7

In recent times, possibly under the influence of Garry Kasparov, the King's Indian Defence has appeared in Carlsen's repertoire. But his choice of it at a decisive stage of the tournament, in the game with Ponomariov, apparently took account of the variation employed by Ruslan against Radjabov at the start of the tournament.

4. e4 d6 5. f3 0–0 6. ♙ge2

It was this move, employed by Ponomariov against Radjabov, the leading King's Indian player of modern times (the classical continuation is 6. ♙e3), that drew Magnus's attention in preparing a new line of play.



6...♙bd7

Radjabov played 6...e5?!, and after 7 ♙g5! he experienced some difficulties. Therefore Carlsen develops his knight, reducing the potential of 7. ♙g5. But it should be mentioned that, when White delays the development of his bishop, Black most

often responds with an immediate flank attack – 6...c5.

7. ♙e3 c5

Here is the surprise. It transpires that Carlsen is not even contemplating ...e7–e5 and he prefers to transpose into a Modern Benoni structure, where the bishop at e3 is not on its best square.

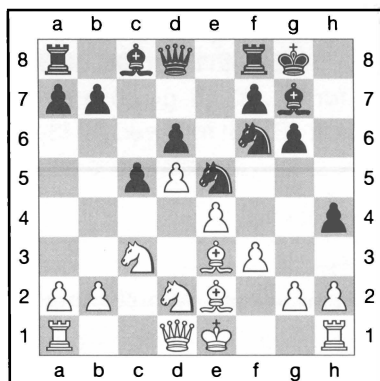
8. d5 ♙e5 9. ♙g3 h5

The play is based on nuances. Black hurries to drive the knight to f1, as White cannot prevent the advance of the pawn by 10. h4, since in this case, because of the weakness of the g4-square, he will never be able to carry out the thematic f3–f4. After 9...e6 10. ♙e2 exd5 11. cxd5 a6 12. a4, a natural move order for the Modern Benoni, 12...h5 proves ineffective, since after 13. 0–0 h4 14. ♙h1 the knight switches to the excellent post f2, from where it forestalls Black's threats on the kingside.

10. ♙e2 h4 11. ♙f1 e6 12. ♙d2

12. f4 suggests itself, but then Black is not obliged to retreat, since after 12...♙eg4 13. ♙xg4 ♙xg4 14. ♙xg4 exd5 15. f5 d4 he regains the piece, obtaining good play.

12...exd5 13. cxd5



13...♙d7

At first sight this is a transposition of moves compared with 13...a6 14. a4 ♙d7 15. 0–0 b5, which has been played in numerous games. The best known of these, Vyzhmanin–J. Polgar (Groningen 1994), continued 16. axb5 axb5 17. ♖xa8 ♗xa8 18. h3?! c4 19. ♗e1 (19. f4 ♘d3 20. ♙xd3 cxd3 21. b4 ♗a3 is advantageous to Black) 19... b4 20. ♘d1 ♗a2! 21. ♗xh4 ♙a4 22. f4 ♘d3 with good play for Black. But, of course, 18. ♙xb5 ♙xb5 19. ♘xb5 ♗a6 20. ♘c3 ♖b8 is more critical, with compensation for the pawn typical of such structures (Psakhis–Piket, Amsterdam 1990), or immediately 17. ♙xb5 ♙xb5 18. ♘xb5 ♖b8.

Peter Heine Nielsen recommends 13... h3!? with the idea after 14. g4?! of sacrificing the bishop by 14... ♙xg4 15. fxg4 ♘fxg4 16. ♙f4 ♙h6 17. ♙xe5 ♘xe5 with excellent compensation in the form of complete control of the dark squares. Therefore 13...h3 should be answered by 14 g3.

14. 0–0 b5

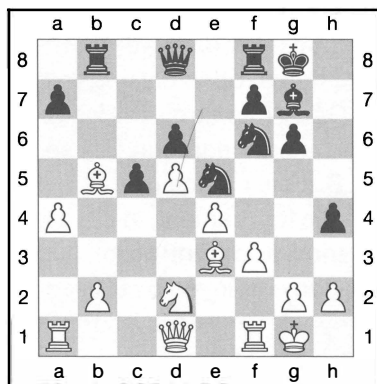
This is the idea of 13...♙d7, but after the next few moves one gains the impression that the prepared line is not too successful. But there are no sensible alternatives. If 14...a6, with the idea after 15. a4 b5 of transposing into the familiar position, White can play 15. h3! with the threat of f3–f4. It is too late for 14...h3 15. g4 a6 in view of the unpleasant 16. g5! followed by f3–f4, and therefore strong measures are necessary.

15. ♘xb5 ♙xb5

If 15...♗b6 White replies with the typical manoeuvre 16. ♘a3 ♗xb2 17. ♘c4, obtaining a serious positional advantage. 15...♗e7 came into consideration, defend-

ing the d6-pawn, and then attacking the knight with ...♖ab8.

16. ♙xb5 ♖b8 17. a4



17...♘h5

In principle, a dubious sortie, removing Black's control of the g4-square – after all, White will not allow the knight to go to f4. But Carlsen was undoubtedly looking further ahead. In the event of 17...h3 18. g4 (18. gxh3 ♗c8) 18...a6 19. ♙xa6 ♖xb2 20. ♖b1 White exchanges the active rook and Black has no compensation for the extra passed pawn. The compensation for the sacrificed pawn is also insufficient after 17...♗a5 18. ♗e2 (or 18. ♗c2 a6 19. ♙e2 ♖b4 20. b3) 18...a6 19. ♘c4 ♘xc4 20. ♙xc4 ♘d7 21. ♖fb1. It would appear that Carlsen recognises how difficult his position is, and he openly bluffs, calmly staking everything.

18. f4!

After this move White has an obvious advantage, but all the miracles lie ahead.

18...♘d7 19. ♗g4 a6! 20. ♙xa6

After 20. ♙xd7 ♘f6 21. ♗xh4 ♘d7 22. ♗xd8 ♖fxd8 Black regains one of the



sacrificed pawns (23. ♖c4 ♗b6 24. ♖a5 ♗e8), retaining quite good compensation for the other one. Ponomariov prefers to have a passed pawn.

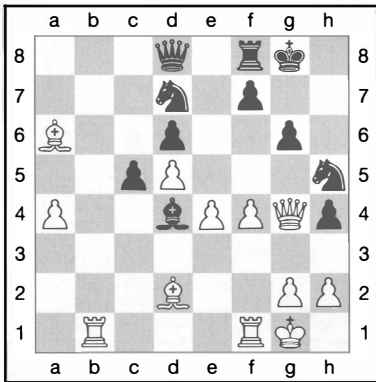
20... ♗xb2 21. ♗ab1

Aiming for the exchange of the active rook. But Carlsen carries out his plan of an attack on the king, begun with his 17th move.

21... ♗xd2!

Everything else is hopeless!

22. ♗xd2 ♗d4+



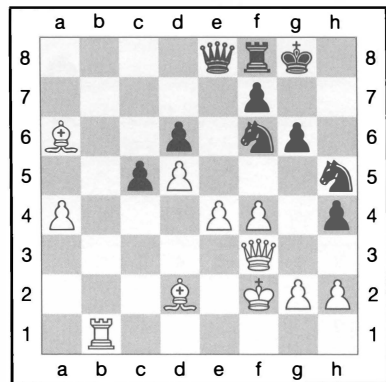
23. ♗f2?

The bluff works! Ponomariov, taking Magnus at his word, blocked with his rook almost without thinking. Of course, commenting on the game on the Internet, and especially in the quiet of one's study, one can consult with *Rybka* and in a few minutes obtain an answer regarding the safety of 23. ♗h1 ♗df6. It is another matter to take such a decision at the board. Ponomariov obviously imagined there were threats involving knight leaps to g3, when his king would come under a cross-fire not only on the a7–g1 diagonal, but also the h-file. These threats were

by no means ephemeral, for example, in the variation 24. ♗xh4 ♗xe4 25. ♗xd8 ♗xd8 26. ♗e1? ♗g3+! 27. hxg3 ♗g7 etc. But is it so simple, when short of time, to find all the nuances in the defence of the king? Apart from 24. ♗xh4 White also has to calculate 24. ♗f3 ♗g3+ 25. hxg3 hxg3 and find a series of exact moves: 26. ♗e1!, with the calculation branches 26... ♗g7!? 27. ♗xg3 ♗h8+ 28. ♗h2 ♗xe4 29. ♗b8! and 26... ♗xe4!? 27. ♗xg3 ♗xg3+ 28. ♗xg3 ♗g7 29. ♗f2!. Such resources, incidentally, already on the 7th move of the calculation (beginning with 23. ♗h1) are not easy to discover. But now the advantage passes to Black.

23... ♗xf2+ 24. ♗xf2 ♗df6 25. ♗f3 ♗e8!

The e4- and a4-pawns are under attack. Which of them should be defended?



26. e5

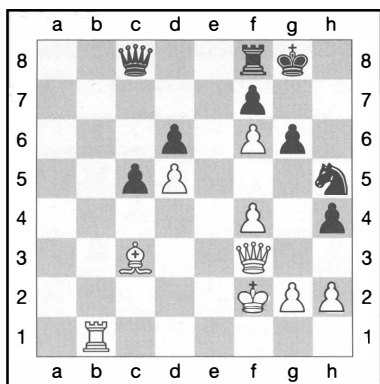
Ponomariov takes the more energetic decision. In the event of 26. ♗d3 ♗xa4 27. ♗c1 ♗d4+ 28. ♗f1 ♗e8 29. ♗c3 ♗xe4 30. ♗xd4 ♗xd2+ 31. ♗f2 ♗xf3 32. ♗xf3 cxd4 White still has problems. 26. ♗b5 ♗xe4+ 27. ♗e3! ♗xd2+ 28. ♗xd2 is stronger, with a defensible position.

**26... ♖xa4 27. exf6?**

This is the consequence of the psychological shock, following the loss of a certain advantage. After the straightforward 27. ♙b5 ♜e4+ 28. ♚e1 ♜xd2 29. ♙xa4 ♜xf3+ 30. gxf3 ♜xf4 31. exd6 ♞d8 32. d7 ♜xd5 33. ♞c1 White could have hoped to save the endgame.

27... ♖xa6 28. ♙c3 ♖c8?

Carlsen too has to pay for his past experience. He intends to switch his queen to f5, whereas the game would have been quickly concluded by 28... ♖c4 with an attack not only on the d5- and f4-pawns, but also indirectly on the f6-pawn (29. f5 ♜xf6! 30. ♙xf6 ♖c2+).

**29. ♔g1?**

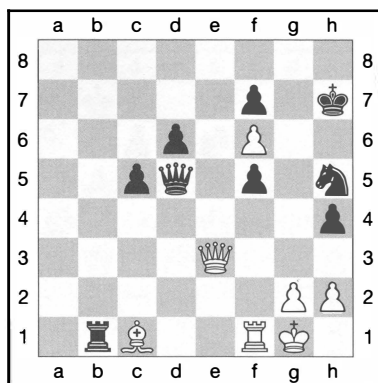
Ponomarev misses a chance opportunity to exchange the queens, making it harder for Black to convert his advantage: 29. f5! ♖xf5 30. ♖xf5 gxf5 31. ♞b6! ♞d8 32. ♔f3. And since if 32... ♔h7 there is the strong reply 33 ♙e1! h3 34 gxf3 ♔g6 35 ♙g3!, Black would have had to find 32... ♞a8! with winning chances (variation by Nielsen).

29... ♖f5

Now, despite the material equality, White's position is strategically hopeless.

30. ♞f1 ♞e8 31. ♙a1 ♞a8 32. ♖e3 ♔h7 33. ♙b2 ♞b8 34. ♙c1 ♞b1

By placing his rook on its optimum square, Black has put White in zugzwang. The d5- and f6-pawns cannot be simultaneously defended.

35. ♖e8 ♖xd5 36. f5 gxf5 37. ♖e3**37... ♖d4**

37... f4 was more forceful: 38. ♖f2 (38. ♖h3 ♖d4+ 39. ♔h1 ♖xf6) 38... ♔g6 39. ♖xh4 ♖d4+ 40. ♖f2 ♖xf2 41. ♔xf2 d5. However, the passed d-pawn also guarantees a win. Carlsen's subsequent technique is impeccable.

38. ♖xd4 cxd4 39. ♙g5 ♞xf1+ 40. ♔xf1 h3 41. gxf3 ♔g6 42. ♙h4 ♜f4 43. ♙g3 ♔g5 44. ♙f2 ♜e6 45. ♔e2 f4 46. ♔f3 d3 47. h4+ ♔f5 48. ♙b6 ♜c5 49. h5 d2 50. ♔e2 ♜e4

White resigned.



In July 2010 Magnus surprised the chess world by beginning an ‘alternative career’ – with his rugged good looks he became a fashion model for the firm G-Star Raw. A few weeks later he took part in the Raw World Chess Challenge in New York, with over 40,000 opponents voting online for the best move out of those selected by an elite grandmaster panel, and Garry Kasparov among the commentary team. Whether this was all proving a distraction is not clear, but in Carlsen’s next event, the Arctic Securities Chess Stars, a rapid-play event of four players held in his home country and organised by the firm which was now sponsoring him, he initially had to play second fiddle to Vishy Anand. The world champion dominated the all-play-all section by scoring 5/6 as opposed to Carlsen’s 3½, but the format provided for a two-game play-off between the top two, and here Carlsen prevailed 1½–½.

Carlsen opted to lead the Norwegian team at the 39th Olympiad, held in the remote Siberian town of Khanty-Mansiysk, although he must have known that he would mainly be facing lower-rated players and in danger of losing rating points. Which is what in fact happened, as he suffered as many as three defeats with Black, including one to Michael Adams after venturing the experimental ‘North Sea Defence’ 1. e4 g6 2. d4 ♖f6 3. e5 ♗h5. Then in the Grand Slam Masters in Bilbao (FIDE category 22!), he finished third behind Kramnik and Anand in this four-player double-round event, his only win coming at the expense of the bottom-placed Alexey Shirov.

Talk of a crisis in Carlsen’s play was dispelled by his fine victory in the third Pearl Spring tournament in Nanjing (FIDE category 21). Facing five 2700+ grandmasters, including world champion Vishy Anand and former FIDE champion Veselin Topalov, Carlsen went through the ten rounds undefeated and with 7/10 finished a point ahead of the 2nd-placed Anand. An incisive attack against Etienne Bacrot made a particularly pleasing impression.

Game 62

M. Carlsen – E. Bacrot

Nanjing 2010

Scotch Game [C45]

**1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♖c6 3. d4 exd4
4. ♖xd4 ♗c5 5. ♖b3**

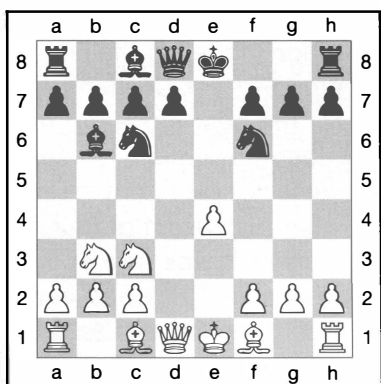
Kasparov tended to favour 5. ♗e3 or 5. ♖xc6, but his protégé prefers this slightly quieter treatment. Some would describe it

as innocuous as it doesn’t pose Black any particular problems.

5...♗b6 6. ♖c3

Carlsen played 6. ♗e2 in four games at the World Blitz Championship in November, but in a ‘real game’ he prefers something more mainstream ...

6...♖f6



7. ♖e2!?

... or does he? This seems to have been first played by the 11-year-old Sergey Karjakin, and not very successfully at that. To date it has not had a good track record in terms of results scored. Added to his dubious opening experiments at the Olympiad, further questions might have been asked of Carlsen's state of mind had this game gone awry, but this proves to be one of his more inspired ideas.

7...0-0

The solid 7...d6 has scored well for Black, with 8. ♗g5 h6 9. ♗h4 and now 9...g5 being a possibility, as Black has yet to castle kingside.

8. ♗g5 h6 9. ♗h4

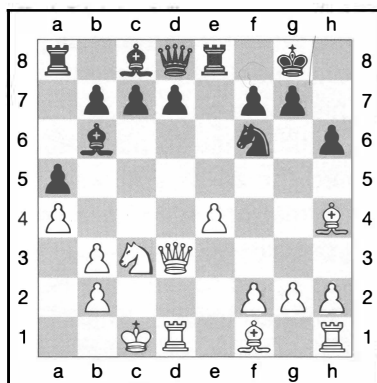
9. h4?! d6 10. f3? h×g5 11. h×g5 ♖g4! (anything else and White will play f4 followed by ♖h5) 12. f×g4 ♖×g5 13. ♖f3 ♗×g4 and Black already had a winning position in the game Rublevsky–Anand, Bastia Rapidplay 2004.

9...a5 10. a4 ♖d4 11. ♖d3!

Carlsen's judgement, that the forthcoming doubled pawns on the b-file will be less

weakening than on the c-file (after 11. ♖d4 ♗×d4 and 12...♗×c3) proves to be spot on.

11...♖×b3 12. c×b3 ♖e8 13. 0-0-0



White signalled his intention to castle queenside as soon as he played 7. ♖e2. His pressure along the d-file and the h4–d8 diagonal compensate for the structural weakness of his queenside.

13...d6 14. ♖c2 ♗d7?!

14...c6 looks more natural, depriving White of the use of b5 and d5 for his minor pieces.

15. ♗c4 ♗e6

Moving this piece twice along the same diagonal gives the impression that Bacrot is unsure of himself. Perhaps he intended 15...♗c6 but then feared an imminent g-pawn advance by White. Whatever his thinking, we can adapt an old proverb and conclude that 'he who hesitates (when playing Black against Carlsen) is lost'.

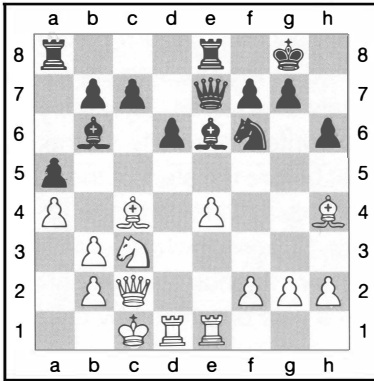
16. ♖he1

16. e5? would cost White a pawn after 16...♗×c4 and a capture on e5, but now the e-pawn advance becomes a real threat.

16...♖e7



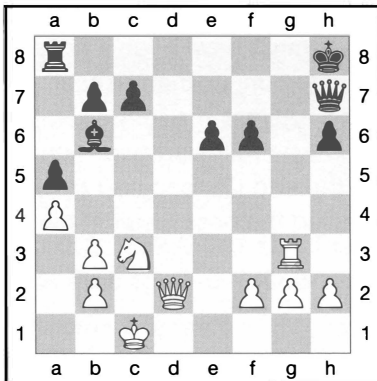
Black's option was to be brave and try 16...g5 to drive away the annoying bishop, but the resulting weakness of his kingside would be a problem.



17. e5! dxe5 18. ♖xe5 ♜f8

This allows a weakening of Black's kingside, but it may be the best of a bad job. 18...c6 would prevent the deadly threat of ♜d5, but 19. ♜e4 is still very strong; 18...g5 is still a possibility, but with the same drawbacks as before.

19. ♜xf6 gxf6 20. ♜e2 ♜g7 21. ♜xe6 ♜xe6 22. ♜xe6 fxe6 23. ♜d3 ♜h8 24. ♜g3 ♜h7 25. ♜d2



With a series of straightforward moves White has established a clear positional

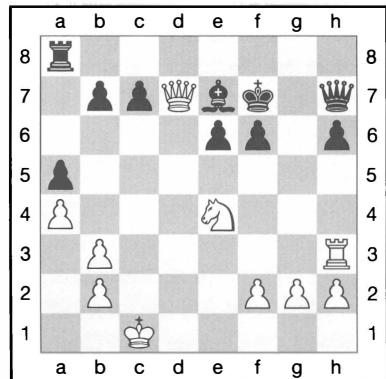
advantage. Black's queen is overworked trying to defend the vulnerable king and he now tries to get his poorly-placed bishop back into the game.

25...♜c5 26. ♜e4 ♜e7 27. ♜h3! ♜g7?

Of course, not 27...♜xe4? when 28. ♜xh6+ soon leads to mate, but the text move also has a tactical flaw. 27...♜d8 28. ♜xh6 ♜xd2 29. ♜xh7+ ♜xh7 30. ♜xd2 is better, but it leaves White a pawn up in a probably winning endgame. 27...♜g8 28. ♜f4 f5 29. ♜xh6 ♜g7 30. ♜h3 also costs Black a pawn.

28. ♜d7! ♜f7

28...♜xe4 loses to 29. ♜xe7+ ♜g6 30. ♜g3+ ♜f5 31. ♜h7+ ♜e5 32. ♜e3 etc.



29. ♜g5+!

Computers points out that 29. ♜xf6! is similarly lethal.

29...f×g5 30. ♜f3+ ♜g8 31. ♜xe6+ ♜h8 32. ♜f7 ♜d6

If the queen flees with 32...♜d3, then 33. ♜xh6+ and mate next move.

33. ♜xh7+ ♜xh7 34. ♜f7+ ♜h8 35. g3 ♜a6



35...♖f8 36. ♖g6 ♖xf2 37. ♖xh6+ ♘g8 36. ♘b1 ♙b4 37. f4 gxf4 38. gxf4
 38. ♖xg5+ and the kingside pawns will decide. Black resigned.

The next elite event – the Tal Memorial Tournament in Moscow – came too soon for the Nanjing contestants to take part, but Carlsen travelled to the Russian capital for the World Blitz Championship which followed immediately afterwards. After his stunning victory the previous year, Carlsen was the clear favourite, especially as the players from the Tal Memorial had enjoyed just one day's rest before the start of the 20-player double-round blitz event. But Levon Aronian, one of the joint winners of the Tal Memorial, overcame his fatigue to score a deserved win, and Carlsen, who lost as many as ten games, had to be content with third place. However, Magnus was delighted to be presented with the 2009 Chess 'Oscar', the result of a vote organised by the Russian chess magazine 64.

Around this time Carlsen shocked and disappointed the chess world by announcing that he was withdrawing from the world championship Candidates matches, due to be held in the spring of 2011. The reasons he gave were the changes made during the cycle, and the fact that he considered the current system to be insufficiently 'modern and fair'. There was speculation that advice from his former mentor Garry Kasparov was behind the decision, but the ex-world champion flatly denied this.

In the second London Chess Classic, held in December 2010, initially it seemed unlikely that Carlsen would repeat his success of the previous year: a surprise loss in the first round to Luke McShane was followed by another in round 3 against Vishy Anand. And yet, with the aid of his fighting spirit, a miraculous endgame save against Vladimir Kramnik in the penultimate round, and also the 'football' scoring system (3 points for a win, 1 for a draw) Carlsen nevertheless emerged the winner.

In January 2011, as usual most of the world's top players lined up in the Tata Steel tournament in Wijk aan Zee. Carlsen made a hesitant start: two draws were followed by a sensational loss to the 16-year-old Anish Giri – it must have been a novel experience for the Norwegian to lose to a player so much younger than himself. Things improved, and a sacrificial attack in the 8th round against the leader Nakamura brought Carlsen right back into contention. But this was followed two rounds later by a bad loss against Ian Nepomniachtchi, and in the end Carlsen had to settle for a share of third place, behind Nakamura, who achieved the best result of his career, and the world champion Anand.



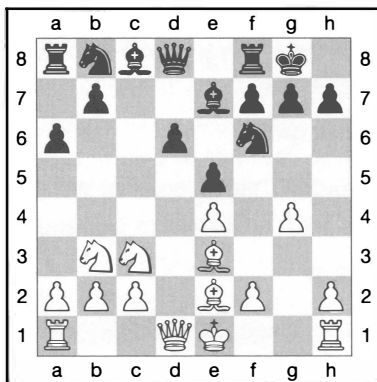
Game 63

M. Carlsen – H. Nakamura

Wijk aan Zee 2011

Sicilian Defence [B92]

1. e4 c5 2. ♖f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4
 ♙f6 5. ♘c3 a6 6. ♕e2 e5 7. ♘b3 ♕e7
 8. ♕e3 0–0 9. g4



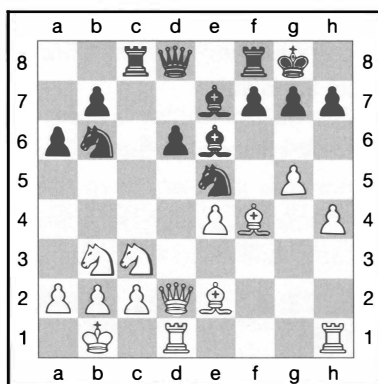
An unusual twist, with the aim of catching the opponent off-balance. Normally White quietly castles kingside in this position, whereas if he wants to castle queenside he prepares it with f2–f3 (rather than ♕e2).

9...♕e6 10. g5 ♘fd7 11. h4

This position has occurred in very few top-level games. An alternative for Black is to advance his a-pawn, with the aim of inducing the weakening a2–a4. For example, the game Khalifman–Gelfand (Las Vegas 1999) went 11. ♖d2 a5 12. a4 ♘c6 13. f4 f5 with double-edged play.

11...♘b6 12. ♖d2 ♘d8 13. f4 exf4
 14. ♕xf4 ♘e5 15. 0–0–0 ♖c8 16. ♖b1

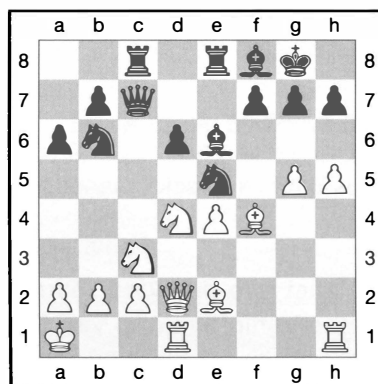
The outcome is a fairly standard type of position from the English Attack, where White has advanced his pawn to f4 in one go, but his bishop may not be best placed on e2.



16...♖c7 17. h5 ♖fe8 18. ♖a1

A prophylactic move, aimed against a possible knight check on a3 after the immediate 18. ♘d4 ♘bc4 19. ♖e1 ♖b6 20. ♕c1 ♘a3+ 21. ♖a1 ♖xd4 or 21...♘c6.

18...♕f8 19. ♘d4



19...♖c5?

Black is evidently aiming to bring his queen to an attacking position at b4 or a5, but this really is too slow. After the game Nakamura suggested 19...g6, the logical consequence of his preceding play, but then White can continue 20. h×g6 h×g6 21. ♘xe6 ♖xe6 22. ♕e3, the point being that 22...♘bc4 23. ♕xc4 ♘xc4 allows



24. ♔d4! (or 24. ♖h2 ♕g7 25. ♔d4). However, the immediate 19... ♕ec4 looks quite adequate for Black.

20. g6 ♕ec4 21. ♕xc4 ♕xc4 22. ♖d3

White has to keep his knight on c3 protected in the event of ... ♕xb2 .

**22... fxg6 23. hxg6 h6 24. ♖g3 ♖b6
25. ♕c1 ♖a5**

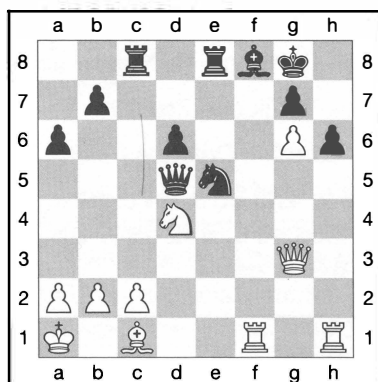
After this White has to counter the threat of Black capturing on b2 and then on c3, followed by mate on a2. After some twenty minutes' thought Carlsen found a good reply.

26. ♖df1 ♕e5

If now 26... ♕xb2 , then White's rook on d1 is no longer attacked, and after 27. ♕xe6 ♖xc3 28. ♖f4 he is the one who forces mate.

27. ♕d5 ♕xd5 28. exd5 ♖xd5

After this White's attack crashes through. Black resigned.



29. ♕xh6! gxh6

If 29... ♖xd4 White gives mate with 30. ♕e3 followed by 31. ♖h8+ .

30. g7 ♕e7

30... ♕xg7 loses immediately to 31. ♕f5 ♖c7 32. ♕xh6+ followed by 33. ♕g4+ or 33. ♕f7+ .

**31. ♖xh6 ♕f7 32. ♖g6 ♕xh6 33. ♖xh6 ♕f6 34. ♖h8+ ♕f7 35. g8♖+ ♖xg8
36. ♖xf6+ ♕e8 37. ♖e1+**

For the past two decades years the Melody Amber tournament, with its generous sponsorship by Joop van Oosterom and its unique format of blindfold and rapid chess, has been one of the highlights of the elite chess calendar. Sadly, it was announced that the 20th event, held in Monaco in March 2011, was to be the last. As usual, a truly stellar line-up had been invited. Carlsen made the same score as the previous year when he finished equal first – 14½ out of 22, including a phenomenal 9½ out of 11 in the rapid games! – but this time it was good enough only for second place behind the inspired Levon Aronian, who finished a full point ahead.

With no Linares tournament in 2011, and with Carlsen not taking part in the Candidates matches, he had a lengthy break between Monaco and his next tournament in Romania in June. Meanwhile the Candidates matches went ahead in Kazan and produced a deserved but unexpected winner, Boris Gelfand. But there was also a storm of criticism, as only three of the thirty main games produced a decisive result,



there was a spate of short draws, and four of the matches were decided in rapid or even blitz games. The feeling was that Carlsen's principled stand against the current world championship format had been justified.

After a ten-week break Carlsen was glad to be back in action in Romania at the 5th Kings Tournament, a six-player double-round event (FIDE category 21), held this year in Medias. He began with an incisive win over the Wijk aan Zee victor Nakamura, and after smoothly overcoming Nisipeanu after an innocuous-looking opening he led at the half-way stage with $3\frac{1}{2}/5$. His only real rival was Sergey Karjakin, who drew level in the penultimate round with a crushing 22-move win over the underperforming Vasily Ivanchuk. The stage seemed set for a grandstand finish, with the two players paired together in the last round. But Magnus had one of those days that he would 'like to forget', and in the end, despite playing White, he was relieved to draw and share first place with his opponent on $6\frac{1}{2}$ out of 10, two points ahead of the rest of the field. Carlsen was placed first on the tie-break, and his result was good enough to regain him the No. 1 spot in the world rating list, published on 1 July 2011.

Game 64

M. Carlsen – L.-D. Nisipeanu

Medias 2011

Queen's Gambit Accepted [D27]

**1. d4 d5 2. c4 dxc4 3. e3 ♘f6 4. ♙xc4
e6 5. ♘f3 c5 6. 0-0 a6 7. dxc5**

A seemingly innocuous line, leading to an early exchange of queens, but White retains a nagging edge and Black has to defend accurately. It was a favourite with Boris Spassky in the later years of his career (in particular, he played it four times against Bobby Fischer in their 'return match' in 1992), and it also suits the technical style of Vladimir Kramnik (for example, he played it against Garry Kasparov in their world championship match in 2000).

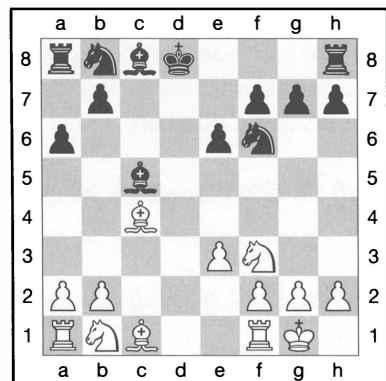
Psychologically this would seem to be a good choice against Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu, the leading Romanian player, who is noted for his aggressive style. For example, in four of his games in Medias

he sacrificed a pawn for active play, and, although heavily outgraded by the rest of the players, this gained him a very respectable result.

7... ♙xc5

7... ♖xd1 8. ♙xd1 ♙xc5 is the more usual continuation.

8. ♖xd8+ ♔xd8



9. ♙e2



9. ♖bd2 is more popular, although this may simply transpose.

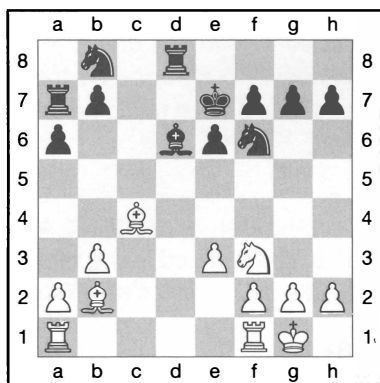
9...♗e7 10. ♖bd2 ♙d7

An alternative set-up involves 10...b6, ...♗b7 and ...♖bd7.

11. ♖b3 ♙d6

Now Black will be more or less obliged to concede the bishop pair, which he could have avoided by 11...♙a7.

12. ♖a5 ♖a7 13. ♖c4 ♙b5 14. b3 ♖d8 15. ♙b2 ♙xc4 16. ♙xc4

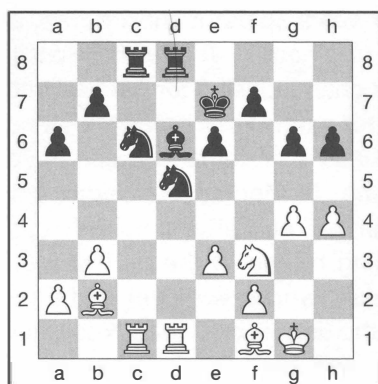


White's two bishops give him a slight advantage, but as yet there are no real weaknesses in Black's position.

16...♖c6 17. ♖fd1 ♖aa8 18. h3 g6 19. g4

White sets about gaining space on the kingside.

19...h6 20. ♙f1 ♖ac8 21. ♖ac1 ♖d5 22. h4



22...♗e8

This looks rather passive. Perhaps Nisipeanu should have aimed for counterplay with 22...♖cb4:

- a) 23. a3 ♖a2 24. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 25. ♙d3 b5, and Black's control of c3 promises him reasonable chances, despite the exotic position of his knight on a2;
- b) 23. e4 ♖xc1 24. ♖xc1 ♖xa2 25. exd5 ♖xc1 26. ♙xc1 ♖c8 27. ♙xh6 ♖c3 28. ♙e3 ♖xb3 29. h5, with a sharp ending where the white h-pawn is more of an immediate danger than Black's connected passed pawns on the queenside.

23. g5 hxg5

It would surely have been safer to keep the h-file closed by 23...h5.

24. hxg5 ♙e7 25. ♗g2

A necessary preparation for the planned invasion on the h-file.

25...♖b6

Again too passive. 25...♖cb4 26. a4 ♖c6 followed by ...♖a5 would have given Black some counterplay against White's queenside pawns.



26. ♔d3!

A nice pawn sacrifice, which activates the light-square bishop and clears the way for a rook to go to h1.

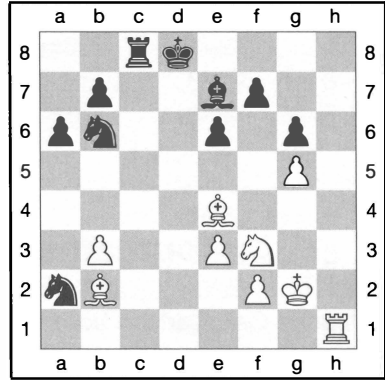
**26...♖b4 27. ♙e4 ♖xg2 28. ♖xg8+
♜xg8 29. ♖h1**

(see next diagram)

Suddenly Black is lost. All the white pieces are very active and there is no satisfactory defence against the invasion by the rook.

29...♖d5 30. ♖e5 f5 31. ♙xg5

Black resigned in view of 31...exd5



32. ♖h8+ ♜c7 33. ♖h7 ♜d6 (or 33...♜d8
34. ♙d4) 34. ♙a3+ ♜xe5 35. ♖xe7 mate.

'I think I played a very decent game!'
(Carlsen)

The world championship match scheduled for 2012 will be between two players well into their forties. Magnus Carlsen is less than half their age – it is abundantly clear that time is still well on his side!



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Tournament and Match Record

Sven Magnus Øen Carlsen born 30th November 1990 in Tønsberg, Norway. Gained the International Master title in 2003, and the International Grandmaster title in 2004. Became the No. 1 rated player in the world in January 2010, a position which he regained in July 2011. Awarded the Chess 'Oscar' in 2009 and 2010.

MAJOR TOURNAMENTS

2001

			+	=	-
Troll Masters, Gausdal	40th–45th	3/9	2	2	5
Norwegian Open Championship, Oslo	9th–13th	5½/9	5	1	3
Gausdal Classics	8th	2½/9	0	5	4
Nordic Championships, Bergen	71st–80th	3½/9	2	3	4
Bavarian Open Championship, Bad Wiessee		5/9			
Norwegian Junior Championship, Porsgrunn	1st	6/7			

2002

Troll Masters, Gausdal	24th	4½/9	3	3	3
Gausdal Classics	8th	2½/9	2	1	6
International Shakkinet Tournament, Helsinki	10th	4/11	3	2	6
Open Tournament, Bergen	11th–18th	5/9	4	2	3
Open Tournament, Kiel	15th	6/9			
European under-12 Championship, Peniscola	6th	6/9			
World under-12 Championship, Heraklio	2nd	9/11			

2003

Troll Masters, Gausdal	3rd–6th	7/10	6	2	2
Valle d'Aosta Open	73rd	5/9			
Gausdal Classics	11th–12th	4/11	2	4	5
Norwegian Championship, Fredrikstad	3rd–7th	5½/9	3	5	1
Politiken Cup, Copenhagen	7th–16th	8/11	6	4	1
Schwarzacher Open	2nd–8th	6½/9	5	3	1
European Under-14 Championship, Budva	3rd	6½/9	6	1	2



			+	=	-
World Under-14 championship, Halkidiki	9th–13th	7½/11	7	1	3
Pecaut Memorial, Taormina	2nd–5th	5½/9	3	5	1
First Saturday, Budapest	4th–5th	8/13	5	6	2

2004

International Tournament, Wijk aan Zee C	1st	10½/13	9	3	1
Aeroflot Open, Moscow	40th	5½/9	5	1	3
Reykjavik Open	33rd–43rd	4½/9	4	1	4
Dubai Open	2nd–11th	6½/9	4	5	0
Sigeman Tournament, Malmö/Copenhagen	3rd	5½/9	4	3	2
Norwegian Championship, Molde	1st–2nd	7/9	6	2	1
Politiken Cup, Copenhagen	4th–13th	7½/10	5	5	0
5th Young Masters, Lausanne	5th	6½/11	4	5	2
Gausdal Classic	5th	5/9	4	2	3
Essent Crown, Hoogeveen	4th	2/6	1	2	3

2005

Smartfish Masters, Drammen	8th–9th	3/9	1	4	4
International Tournament, Wijk aan Zee B	7th	7/13	3	8	2
Gausdal Classic	6th–8th	4/9	3	2	4
International Tournament, Leon (rapid)	3rd–4th	1/4	0	2	2
European Championship, Warsaw	18th–53rd	8/13	5	6	2
Norwegian Championship, Sandnes	1st–2nd	7/9	6	2	1
Play-off v. Agdestein, Oslo	2nd	3½–4½	2	3	3
International Tournament, Biel	6th	4/10	0	8	2
6th Young Masters, Lausanne	5th	5½/8	4	3	1
Bygger'n Masters, Gausdal	1st	8/9	7	2	0
Scanda Cup, Skanderborg	8th	4/9	1	6	2

2006

International Tournament, Wijk aan Zee B	1st–2nd	9/13	6	6	1
Open Tournament, Reykjavik	6th–9th	6½/9	6	1	2
International Tournament, Sarajevo	1st–3rd	5½/10	1	9	0
Midnight Sun Tournament, Tromsø	2nd	7/9	6	2	1
Norwegian Championship, Moss	1st–2nd	7/9	6	2	1
Play-off v. Agdestein, Oslo	1st	3–1	2	2	0
International Tournament, Biel	2nd–3rd	6/10	4	4	2
Rising Stars v. Experience, Amsterdam	1st	6½/10	4	5	1
World Blitz Championship, Rishon Le Zion	8th	7½/15	5	5	5
International Tournament, Cap d'Agde (rapid)	semi-final	7/11	4	6	1
Tal Memorial Tournament, Moscow	8th–9th	3½/9	0	7	2

**2007**

			+	=	-
International Tournament, Wijk aan Zee	13th–14th	4½/13	0	9	4
International Tournament, Morelia/Linares	2nd	7½/14	4	7	3
Melody Amber Tournament, Monaco	8th–9th	10½/22	3	15	4
International Tournament, Gausdal	1st	7/9	5	4	0
Sparkassen Tournament, Dortmund	6th	3/7	0	6	1
International Tournament, Biel	1st–2nd	5½/9	4	3	2
Blitz play-off v. Onischuk	1st	3/5	1	4	0
Open Tournament, Tromsø	2nd–4th	7/9	5	4	0
Blindfold World Cup, Bilbao	2nd–3rd	6/10	4	4	2
Tal Memorial Tournament, Moscow	3rd–5th	4½/9	1	7	1
World Blitz Championship, Moscow	9th	20½/38	15	11	12

2008

International Tournament, Wijk aan Zee	1st–2nd	8/13	5	6	2
International Tournament, Morelia/Linares	2nd	8/14	5	6	3
Melody Amber Tournament, Nice	2nd–5th	12/22	7	10	5
Grand Prix Tournament, Baku	1st–3rd	8/13	4	8	1
Aerosvit Tournament, Foros	1st	8/11	5	6	0
International Tournament, Biel	3rd	6/10	3	6	1
International Tournament, Mainz (rapid)	2nd	4½/10	1	7	2
Tal Memorial Blitz Tournament, Moscow	3rd	21/34	16	10	8
Grand Slam Final, Bilbao	2nd–3rd	13/30*	3	4	3
International Tournament, Cap d'Agde (rapid)	semi-final	8½/13	5	7	1

2009

Aker International Tournament, Gjovik (rapid)	2nd	4½/8	3	3	2
International Tournament, Wijk aan Zee	5th–6th	7/13	2	10	1
International Tournament, Linares	3rd	7½/14	3	9	2
Melody Amber Tournament, Nice	4th	13/22	8	10	4
Mtel Masters Tournament, Sofia	2nd–3rd	6/10	3	6	1
International Tournament, Leon (rapid)	1st	7½/13	4	7	2
Sparkassen Tournament, Dortmund	2nd–4th	5½/10	2	7	1
Pearl Spring Tournament, Nanjing	1st	8/10	6	4	0
Tal Memorial Tournament, Moscow	2nd–3rd	5½/9	2	7	0
World Blitz Championship, Moscow	1st	31/42	28	6	8
Chess Classic Tournament, London	1st	13/21*	3	4	0

2010

International Tournament, Wijk aan Zee	1st	8½/13	5	7	1
Melody Amber Tournament, Nice	1st–2nd	14½/22	13	3	6
King's Tournament, Bazna	1st	7½/10	5	5	0



			+	=	-
Arctic Stars Tournament, Kristiansund (rapid)	1st	5/8	3	4	1
Grand Slam Final, Bilbao	3rd	2½/6	1	3	2
Pearl Spring Tournament, Nanjing	1st	7/10	4	6	0
World Blitz Tournament, Moscow	3rd	23½/38	19	9	10
Chess Classic Tournament, London	1st	13/21*	4	1	2

2011

International Tournament, Wijk aan Zee	3rd–4th	8/13	5	6	2
Melody Amber Tournament, Monaco	2nd	14½/22	11	7	4
King's Tournament, Medias	1st–2nd	6½/10	3	7	0
International Tournament, Biel	1st	19/30*	5	4	1

*These tournaments employed the scoring system of 3 points for a win and 1 point for a draw.

INDIVIDUAL MATCHES

FIDE World Championship

2004 v. Aronian, Tripolis (1st round)	1½–2½	0	3	1
2007 v. Aronian, Elista (Candidates 1/8 final)	5–7	3	4	5

FIDE World Cup

2005 Khanty-Mansiysk				
v. Azmaiparashvili (1st round)	3–1	3	0	1
v. Amonatov (2nd round)	1½–½	1	0	1
v. Cheparinov (3rd round)	3–1	3	0	1
v. Bareev (4th round)	2½–1½	1	3	0
v. Lautier (places 9–16)	1½–½	1	1	0
v. Malakhov (places 9–12)	3½–2½	2	3	1
v. Kamsky (places 9–10)	1–3	1	0	3
2007 Khanty-Mansiysk				
v. Zhao Zong Yuan (1st round)	2–0	2	0	0
v. Naiditsch (2nd round)	3–1	2	2	0
v. Dominguez (3rd round)	1½–½	1	1	0
v. Adams (1/8 final)	1½–½	1	1	0
v. Cheparinov (1/4 final)	1½–½	1	1	0
v. Kamsky (1/2 final)	½–1½	0	1	1

**Other Matches**

Other Matches			+	=	-
2004	v. Kasparov (rapid)	½–1½	0	1	1
2006	v. Svidler, Longyearbyen (rapid)	½–1½	0	1	1
	v. van Wely, Schagen	5½–2½	4	3	1
2007	v. Radjabov, Porto Vecchio	2–3	1	2	2
2008	v. Leko, Miskolc (rapid)	5–3	2	6	0

TEAM EVENTS**World Chess Olympiad**

2004	Calvia, board 1	3/5	2	2	1
2006	Turin, board 1	6/8	4	4	0
2008	Dresden, board 1	$7\frac{1}{2}$ /11	5	5	1
2010	Khanty-Mansiysk, board 1	$4\frac{1}{2}$ /8	4	1	3

European Team Championship

2007	Crete, board 1	$6\frac{1}{2}$ /9	5	3	1
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European Club Cup

2001	Panormo, board 6	$4\frac{1}{2}$ /7	3	3	1
2003	Rethymnon, board 1	$3\frac{1}{2}$ /7	3	1	3
2007	Kemer, board 3	$4\frac{1}{2}$ /7	3	3	1
2008	Kallithea, board 1	3/6	2	2	2



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Now firmly established among the world's elite, the Norwegian **Magnus Carlsen** has been setting records ever since he embarked on his chess career. He became a grandmaster at the age of just 13, and in 2010 he became the youngest player to be ranked No.1 in the world.

According to his mentor, Garry Kasparov, Carlsen has a positional style similar to previous world champions such as José Raúl Capablanca, Vasily Smyslov and Anatoly Karpov. The comparison with the Cuban genius Capablanca seems especially apt, as Carlsen also comes from a small country with no particularly strong chess traditions.

This book presents detailed annotations to 64 of Carlsen's best games, together with a description of his career. Also examined are the deficiencies from which he suffered as a young player, and how he overcame these on his way to the top.

The authors are both well known to the chess world, with numerous previous books to their credit. Adrian Mikhalechishin is a Ukrainian grandmaster with extensive training experience, while Oleg Stetsko is a national master and a former senior trainer of the USSR team.

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